Indian Madhyamaka Buddhist Philosophy After Nagarjuna, Volume 2

Plain English Translations and Summaries of the Essential Works of Chandrakirti and Shantideva and Two Early Madhyamaka Critiques of God

Richard H. Jones

INDIAN MADHYAMAKA BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AFTER NAGARJUNA Volume 2

Plain English Translations of the Essential Works of Chandrakirti and Shantideva and Two Early Madhyamaka Critiques of God

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Translated with Notes and Commentaries by Richard H. Jones

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Abbreviations

BC — Shantideva's *Entering the Bodhisattva's Path* (*Bodhicarya-avatara*) CS — Aryadeva's *The Four Hundred Verses*

(*Catuh-shataka-shastra-karikanama*)
HVNP — Aryadeva's *Hand Treatise* (*Hasta-vala-nama-prakarana*) MA — Chandrakirti's *Entry the Middle Way* (*Madhyamaka -avatara*) MAS — Bhavaviveka's *Summary of the Meaning of the Middle Way*

(*Madhyamaka-artha-samgraha*)

MHK — Bhavaviveka's *Verses on the Heart of the Middle Way* (*Madhyamaka-hridaya-karikas*)
MK — Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way* (*Mula-madhyamaka-karikas*)
MKV — Buddhapalita's Commentary on Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way* (*Mula-Madhyamaka-karika-vritti*)
Pr — Chandrakirti's *Clearly-Worded Commentary* (*Prasanna-pada*)
R — Nagarjuna's *Jewel Garland of Advice* (*Ratna-vali*)
Sk — Shantideva's *Collection of the Teachings* (*Shiksa-samucchaya*)
SS — Aryadeva's *One Hundred Verses* (*Shataka-shastra*)
SSK — Nagarjuna's *Seventy Verses on Emptiness*
(*Shunyata-saptati-karikas*)
VP — Nagarjuna's *Pulverizing the Categories* (*Vaidalya-prakarana*)
VV — Nagarjuna's *Overturning the Objections* (*Vigraha-vyavartanti*)
YS — Nagarjuna's *Sixty Verses on Argument (Yukti-shashtikas*)

Preface

This volume completes the presentation of selected texts of the Buddhist Madhyamaka tradition in India. (This book presumes that the reader is familiar with Volume 1 [Jones 2011] and *Nagarjuna: Buddhism's Most Important Philosopher* [Jones 2010].) It picks up the history two centuries after the last works of the first volume, those of Bhavaviveka. Apparently, very little survives from the period between then and the first author presented here, Chandrakirti. There are other Madhyamaka texts in Sanskrit that survive from a later period, but this ends the most creative period of Indian Madhyamaka thought. Chandrakirti and Shantideva were "the last two major representatives of the authentic Madhyamika doctrine" (Ricci 1988: 6).

This also was the end of any "pure" Madhyamaka schools in India. In the generation after Shantideva, hybrids of Madhyamaka and the more prominent Yogachara tradition developed, beginning with Shantarakshita and Kamalashila. (See Eckel 1987 and Blumenthal 2004 for studies of two later Madhyamikas, Jnangarbha and Shantarakshita.) The Yogachara tradition, also known as the *Chitta-matra* ("nothing but mind") and *Vijnana-vada* ("the doctrine of consciousness"), took external objects to have no reality — for them, extramental "objects" are merely projections of the mind, while the Madhyamikas gave such objects conventional reality and characteristics. Some later Madhyamikas adopted the Yogachara idea of an underlying "storehouse-consciousness (*alaya-vijnana*)" to explain personal continuity. Like "Prasangika" and "Svatantraka," there was no Sanskrit labels for the resulting hybrid Yogachara-Madhyamaka schools; all the labels were later Tibetan inventions. Moreover, among the Indian Mahayanists, the divisions were fluid and did not represent "schisms" as with the major divisions within Christianity.

Nagarjuna and the Madhyamaka tradition as a whole did not have the influence in Indian Buddhism that it had in Tibet and East Asia, let alone the prominence it is given in the West today, and so it is not surprising that in India the tradition was absorbed by the dominant Yogachara tradition. Basically, "aside from a few commentators on N~g~rjuna's works, who identified themselves as M~dhyamikas, Indian intellectual life continued almost

as if N ~g~rjuna had never existed" (Hayes 1994: 299). Other schools gave their own definition to "emptiness (*shunyata*)" and described themselves as the "middle way" between total nonexistence and eternal, permanent realities. Those who noted the Madhyamikas at all only did so to reject them. Chandrakirti was virtually totally ignored until many centuries after his death (Vose 2009: 18-20) and only one Indian commentary on his work is known.

As with the earlier books, the translations from Sanskrit here are attempts to make the works understandable to those within the general public who are interested in philosophy. The basic texts, unlike the commentaries, were pithy because they were designed to be chanted and memorized. (Chandrakirti's *Entering the Middle Way* and Shantideva's *Entering the Bodhisattva's Path* are still chanted and memorized today.) Sometimes there is no verb in a Sanskrit line but only nouns and ancillary words. In many lines, a pronoun is used to refer to a word in a previous verse or to something that the listeners have been told but that the translator must now supply — sometimes even

a pronoun is omitted. Words thus have often been added in English to fill out the terse verses — including sometimes a subject or verb. Material has also been added in parentheses to indicate my interpretation of what the text means or to offer explanations. The texts were never meant to be understood independently of a teacher or a tradition's commentary — it was understood that there would be a teacher there explaining the lines more fully. That the listeners would share a common philosophical background and thus already know the meaning of many of the technical terms also made it less necessary for the authors to expand their thoughts.

Also as with the earlier books, the basic works have been reformatted here from a series of verses into sentences and paragraphs grouped as the subject-matter dictates. The grammar and syntax (e.g., changing a passive voice to active) has also been changed when it helps clarify the meaning. Attempts to modernize the works — e.g., translating a word that means "unreasonable" or "unacceptable" as "illogical" or "logically contradictory" or "logically impossible" — have been resisted because of the danger that they distort the original works and mislead the modern reader. (One concession has been to change the experiential flavor of verbs denoting "*x* is not found' or "*x* is not seen" to the ontological claim "*x* does not exist"or "there is no *x*.") Certainly, overtly reading Western philosophy and contemporary science into premodern Indian texts has been avoided.

* * *

I. Translations Chandrakirti

(fl. 600-650)

Chandrakirti probably came from South India. He supposedly used miracles to convert others to the doctrine of emptiness (e.g., supplying the community of monks with milk by milking a picture of a cow and passing his hand through a pillar to show its lack of self-existence). He ended up abbot of the great Buddhist monastic university at Nalanda located near Rajgir in Bihar in northeast India. There he clashed with the Sanskrit grammarian Chandragomin. But he became the most prominent Madhyamika after Nagarjuna on philosophical matters — indeed, the modern scholarly understanding of Nagarjuna is tightly shaped by the understanding of Chandrakirti.

The first text presented here is Chapter 6 of his *Entering the Middle Way*. The text is still used today in Tibetan monasteriesas the basic introduction to the Madhyamaka school. He wrote it before the *Clearly-worded Commentary*. It is composed in the same tense style that most of these texts were. It assumes background knowledge and requires commentary; in fact, he wrote a commentary to it after composing the *Clearly-worded Commentary* whose contents suggests that he did not change his positions in the interim. The text is no longer extant in Sanskrit, but the Sanskrit for this chapter has been reconstructed from the Tibetan (Sastri 1929-32); this means that the new Sanskrit may reflect a particular Tibetan understanding of the text.

The second text is his *Clearly-worded Commentary* on Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way* (MK). (Verses from the MK are indented and in italics; they are sometimes translated differently than in Jones 2010 to reflect Chandrakirti's understanding of the text.) The entire text would be over 600 pages in translation, but the basics of his teachings can be presented with selections. The first selection — his commentary on MK 1 — in fact is itself a summary of his teachings. (Some long quotations from other texts have been omitted or abbreviated.) Also included are his commentaries on chapters 15, 24, part of 18, and 25. New topic headings have been added.

* * *

Entering the Middle Way (Madhyamaka-avatara)

Chapter 6

[1] On the stage of their path called "Directly Facing the Realm of Truth," bodhisattvas abide with a concentrated mind. They proceed toward the qualities of a perfect buddha and perceive the nature of dependent-arising. They dwell in wisdom and thereby attain the cessation of rebirths. [2] A single person with sight can easily lead a group of blind people to their desired destination, and so it is with wisdom here: it takes the sightless virtues and guides them to victory. [3] The noble Nagarjuna grasped the profound nature of things through reasoning as well as through scriptural authority, and the approach to be advanced here is inaccord with his way.

[4] When some ordinary persons merely hear about emptiness, great joy wells up again and again. Their eyes fill with tears of joy, and the hair on their body stand on end. [5] They have the seed of a perfect buddha and are receptive students for the teaching of the true nature of reality. It is to them that reality from the ultimate point of view should be taught since thereby they will receive the qualities necessary for enlightenment. [6] They always embrace the code of proper conduct, give generously, practice compassion, and cultivate patience. They apply the merit of these practices toward their awakening for the liberation of all living creatures. [7] They venerate the perfect bodhisattvas. Those people who are expert inthis profound and vast way will, step by step, attain the stage called "the Great Joy." Those alone who yearn for this stage should listen to this path.

The Non-Arising of Phenomena from Themselves or Others

[8] No entity arises from itself, but how can it arise from another? It does not arise from both itself and another, but how can it arise without a cause? It would be entirely pointless for an entity to arise from itself (since it must already exist to arise). In addition, it is inadmissible to suggest that something that is already arisen could be arise all over again. [9] If you think that what is already arisen gives rise to further arisings, then either the production of, for example, a sprout from a seed cannot occur in everyday experience (because the effect already exists), or else its seed would produce sprouts again and again until the end of all existence — for how could all these sprouts ever do away with the seed?

[10] For you Samkhyas (who maintain that the effect is present but unmanifested in the cause and so is identical to the cause), there is no difference in the sprout's shape, color, taste, efficacy, or ripening as the effect of the seed as the cause. [11] If for you the seed is not different from the associated sprout, then either what is termed "the sprout" would, like the seed, never be perceived, or the seed would look precisely like the sprout since the two are the same. Thus, this cannot be maintained. [12] Because the effect is seen only if the cause has ceased, the two are not the same even on the level of everyday experience. Thus, to suggest that things are selfproduced is inadmissible from the point of view both of ultimate truth and conventional truth. [13] If self-production is maintained, then "product," "producer," "effect," and "agent of production" would be identical. But they are obviously not identical, and thus the claim of self-production is not acceptable because of the objectionable consequences that have been explained extensively in Nagarjuna's*Fundamental Verses of the Middle*

Way.

[14] Turning to the second option for arising: If one entity were indeed to come into existence from dependence on something else, thick darkness would arise from fire. Indeed, if this were the case, then you must agree that anything could arise from anything, since it is not merely the cause that is different from its effect but all things unproductive of that effect are different from that effect.

Objection : [15] What is capable of being produced is for that reason designated "the effect," and what is capable of generating it is "the cause," even though it is different from the effect. They belong to one continuum of causes and effects. The effect was produced from what gives rise to it, and so it is not the case that, for example, a rice sprout is caused by a barley seed.

Reply : [16] You do not judge that a barley seed or a lotus seed or a kimshuka flower seed or any other type of seed produces a rice sprout because they do not possess the capacity to do so, and because they are not included in a common continuum with the rice sprout, and because they are differ from a sprout. [17] Seed and sprout do not exist simultaneously, so how then can the seed be different from the sprout when there is no sprout existing at the same time for it to contrast with? Thus, the sprout cannot be produced from the seed (as another thing existing at the same time). Thus, the proposition "There is production from another" should be given up.

Objection : [18ab] Just as the ends of a scale's beam can be seen moving simultaneously — i.e., one goes up as the other goes down — so too the arising of an effect and the cessation of the cause are simultaneous.

Reply : [18cd] Even though the movement of the beam's ends are simultaneous, there is no such simultaneity of the producer and product. Thus, the example is not apropos.

Objection : [19ab] What is being produced (i.e., the effect) "tends toward" arising but does not yet exist, while what is ceasing (i.e., the cause) "tends toward" cessation but still exists.

Reply : [19cd] How then is this similar to the example of the scale? Such "production" in the absence of a producer makes no sense.
[20] If visual cognition arises at the same time as its causes arise — the physical eye, the perception, and so forth — it is other than them and is already existing. Then what need is there for it to come into existence again? (That is, if the cognition is other then the causes, it is not caused by them and must already exist.) But if you claim that it does not already exist, then the flaw in your thesis was already explained above.
[21] If a producer is a cause that produces something other than itself, then is what is produced real, unreal, both, or neither? If the product is real, then what need is there for a producer to do? If it does not real, then what has the producer done? What was accomplished if the product is both real and unreal or if it is neither?

The Two Types of Truths

Objection : [22] We maintain that "worldly consensus" is a valid means to knowledge within the

conventional realm. Thus, what is to be accomplished by these demands for a reason here? In addition, the worldly consensus knows that something arises from something else, and thus that there is "production from another." What possible need is there for a reason here?

Reply : [23] All entities, because they can been seen with either an accurate or erroneous perception, have a dual nature. Whatever is the object revealed through an accurate perception is "reality as it truly is," while what is revealed through an erroneous perception is declared to be a concealing "conventional truth." [24] In addition, we maintain that there are two categories of erroneous perception: one having a healthy sense-faculty, and one having an impaired sense-faculty. The understanding of those with impaired sense-faculties is considered false compared to the understanding from healthy sense-faculties.

[25] From a conventional point of view, anything that is apprehended through any of the six sense-faculties (the five senses and the mind) when they are unimpaired is reality for the conventional world. All remaining mental discriminations are deemed to be false from the conventional point of view. [26] Things imagined about a "person" by non-Buddhists who are corrupted by the sleep of the root-ignorance are all nonexistent. They are imaginary conceptions, phantoms, mirages, and so forth, since even from a conventional point of view they do not exist. [27] Just as the observations of an eye afflicted with an eye-defect do not invalidatethe knowledge of an eye free of any defect, so the intellect of those from whom uncontaminated wisdom is concealed does not invalidate uncontaminated knowledge.

[28] Delusion is a concealment precisely because its nature is to conceal. Whatever appears conventionally seems to be real, and the Buddha has called this "conventional reality," and any entity that is fabricated is a concealment. [29] Under the influence of an eye-defect, such falseimages as a hair in front of the eyes are formed, while an unimpaired eye sees what is real. The two truths must be understood in an analogous manner. [30] If everyday experiences were valid means of knowing reality as it truly is, then ordinary cognition would see reality as it truly is. What need then would there be for others, i.e., the noble ones (the enlightened and those advanced on the path)? And what would be accomplished by treading the noble path? It is unreasonable for such foolish means to be accepted as valid. [31] Since ordinary experience is not a valid means of knowing reality as it truly is, the conventional point of view does not contradict reality from the ultimate point of view. But consensus approves conventional matters, and consensus negates the denial of them.

[32] The worldly sow the seed and then claim "I created the boy," or they imagine "This is like planting a tree." Thus, even according to the world production is not from another (i.e., something not on the "common continuum" of v. 16). [33] Because the sprout is not different from the seed, the seed is not destroyed at the time when the sprout arises. But because the seed and sprout are not identical, one cannot say that there is a seed when there is a sprout.

[34] If entities existed in dependence on their defining self-characteristics, then by negating of those characteristics through seeing emptiness, entities would be destroyed, and emptiness would be the cause of this destruction. But this is not the case since entities are not real. (That is, emptiness does not *cause* anything — the entities were not real all along.) [35] If entities are examined, nothing is found except that they have the characteristic of reality. (They are empty and have no individual "defining self-characteristic" of an entity.) Thus, mundane conventional usages should not be

critically examined (since “entities” are real conventionally).

[36] Thus, “self-production” and “production from another” are inapplicable when dealing with what is truly real (since there are no real entities to arise). And by the same reasoning, these two options are inapplicable conventionally (since even conventionally nothing arises from itself, and to rise from another, that other must self-exist). Howthen could the “production” you claim occur? [37] It is well-established conventionally that empty entities such as reflections do not appear except independence on a nexus of conditions. And an empty reflection and the like can give rise to a cognition of a form that is also empty. [38] In the same way,all entities are similarly empty of self-existence, and also are produced out of empty causes and conditions. According to the doctrine of two truths, entities are not selfexistent, and thus they are neither eternal nor subject to cessation.

[39] Because there is no self-existent cessation, one must understand that, even without any “storehouse for consciousness” (i.e., a medium to keep the seed of action alive), it is possible for an action that has long since ceased to give rise to an effect somewhere. [40] Even after awakening from a dream, the naive may remain attached to objects apprehended in the dream. So too, an action that has ceased and is without self-existence may still have an effect. [41] And just as the object perceived by someone affected with an eye-defect is an image of floating hair and not an image of something else, so one should know that the ripening of an action is not arbitrary, even though this effect is as unreal as those others. [42] Thus, while a bad act has unwholesome consequences and a good act has wholesome consequences, one finds liberation only when his mind is free from both what is wholesome and is unwholesome. (That is, liberation is not the result of any action.) In addition, speculation concerning action and its consequences has been expressly condemned by the Buddha. [43] Teachings such as “a storehouseconsciousness exists,” “a person exists,” and “only the bodily aggregates exist” are presented (as teaching devices) for those who cannot understand the more profound teaching (of emptiness).

[44] Although the buddhas held no view of a real, self-existent “self,” they nevertheless used the expressions “I” and “mine” in teaching. So too, even though entities are without self-existence, nevertheless they taught in a provisional sense (and not in a final sense) that entities exist.

Refutation of Consciousness as Ultimately Real

[45] *Objection from the Yogacharas*: Where there is no sense-object, no subject can be found, and thus the three realms of existence (i.e., the realm of desire and the “formed” and “unformed” meditative realms) are nothing but mind. Thus, bodhisattvas, abiding in wisdom, realize that reality as it truly is “nothing but mind.” [46] Just as the waves on the ocean are stirred up by the wind, so too nothing but mind arises through its own potencies within the storehouse-consciousness that is the seed of all things. [47] Thus, all things are dependent entities. Their dependent nature is the cause of designating things as (conventionally) real. This nature appears even though there are no external objects to apprehend. This dependent nature is real. Its nature is not open to the possibility of conceptualproliferation.

Reply : [48] But when is there such a thing as a thought without an external object? If you say it is like a dream, thenconsider this: according to you, even in a dream there is no thought without an object.

Thus, your example is unacceptable. [49] If the existence of the mind during the dream is established through memory of the dream when awake, then the existence of the objects in the dream are established in the same way. For just as you recall "I saw . . .," so too there is also a memory of the object from the dream.

Objection : [50] During sleep there is no visual consciousness — there is only the mind without an object. But the dreamer attributes external existence to what is dreamed about. And here while awake, the process is the same.

Reply : [51] But just as according to you no external objects are produced in the dream, so too the mind is not produced either. The eye, the visual object, and the visual cognition produced by them are all false. [52] The three components involved in hearing and those for the other senses likewise are not produced in a dream. And just as the things perceived in the dream are false, so too here are those things perceived while awake. The mind is not self-existent, and neither are the sense-fields or the sense-faculties. [53] He who awakens from the sleep of root-ignorance is the one truly awakening from a dream. So long as one is not awake, the three components remain, but when one awakens they no longer appear.

Objection : [54] Both the hair perceived under the influence of an eye-defect and the cognition associated with the affected sense-organ are real, relative to that cognition. But for one who sees clearly, the two are false.

Reply : [55] If there is a cognition in the absence of any object of cognition, then even those without the eye-defect would see hair when looking at the place where hair was seen by those with defective eyes. But this does not happen. Thus, there is no self-existent cognition.

Objection : [56] Cognition of the hair is caused by potentialities in the mind; if these do not ripen in particular individuals (with healthy eyes), there is no cognition. In this way, the absence of seeing hair is not because of the absence of an entity to serve as the object of knowledge.

Reply : There is no such thing as "potentiality," and so your position is not established. [57] There is no possibility of potentiality for what has already been produced or for an unproduced entity. There can be no characteristics made without something being characterized, for if this were so, it would follow that there is potentiality for the son of a barren woman.

[58] You may attempt to explain that a future cognition will arise from a potentiality, but this not occur because there is no "potentiality." And the noble ones have declared that things that arise dependently in mutual dependence are not established. (That is, they do not have self-existence and thus cannot be real. Thus, if potentiality and future cognition are interdependent, neither is real.) [59] If a cognition arises from a ripening potentiality that has ceased, then one thing would indeed arise from the potentiality of another thing. But then the parts of a continuum of one cognition would be separated from each other. Thus, if this were possible, anything could arise from anything else.

Objection : [60] Although the parts of the continuum are distinct, the continuum itself is continuous, and thus there is no flaw here.
Reply: You still have to demonstrate this since parts of a continuum are not in fact distinct. [61]

Maitreya and Upagupta are different people, and thus their constitutive factors do not belong to the same continuum. Similarly, it would not be admissible that things that differ in their own defining selfcharacteristics could be parts of the same continuum.
Objection: [62] The production of a visual cognition occurs entirely from its own potentiality and immediately from its own (ripened) potentiality. What is understood by ordinary people to be the physical organ of the eye is actually this potentiality that is the source of its own cognition. [63] Here ordinary people think that a cognition of shape and color arises from the sense-organ — they do not realize that the appearance of such things as blueness arises (through the mental visual sense-faculty) from its own seeds ripening in the storehouse-consciousness without any external object, and it is on this account that he supposes that such an external object is present. [64] As in a dream, the image of a discrete form of a object arises from its own ripened potentiality without any such (external) form, so too also here in the waking life: there is cognition without there being any external object.
Reply: [65] In a dream, the mental cognition of such things as blueness arises without an eye. Why then does such a mental cognition not similarly arise from its own seeds here in the waking life to a blind person without any visual sense-organ? [66] If you say that there is the ripening of the potentiality of the sixth sense (i.e., mental cognition) in a blind person's dream, while in the blind person's waking life there is none, then why is it impermissible to say that in the same way that for a blind person there is no ripened potentiality for the sixth sense here in the wakinglife that there is also no ripened potentiality in the dream state? [67] For just as having no eyes does not cause the ripening of potentialities in the waking life, so too sleep does not cause the ripening in a dream. Thus, in a dream as well as in waking life, (only) the sense-object and the eye can provide causes for the perception of illusory things.
[68] Whatever answers you give, we see them as the same thesis based on defective vision. Thus, this argument has been defeated. The buddhas did not teach that any entity whatsoever is real (i.e., self-existent).
Objection: [69] Following the instructions of his teacher, a yogin in meditation visualizes the ground as strewn with skeletons. In this case, it is obvious that all three elements (the eye, the visual object, and the visual cognition) do not arise since there is only the projection of consciousness.
Reply: [70] If in your example, the visualized skeletons cognized in the "repulsion meditation" are of the same nature as objects of sense-perception, then when anyone else look toward the place where the yogin is looking they too should perceive the skeletons. But the skeletons are fictitious and are not perceived. [71] So too, the example of "hungry ghosts" who perceive pus when viewing the water running in a river is no different from that of the visual sense-faculty affected by an eye-defect. In sum, our meaning must be understood thus: just as there are no self-existent objects of cognition, so too there is no self-existent cognition either.
Objection: [72] Now, if dependent entities exist without any external sense-objects or subjects, then who is aware of them? It is unacceptable to say that something exists but is not apprehended.
Reply: [73] It has not been established that a cognition is aware of itself. It cannot be established by using a later memory of the previous event since in that case the evidence offered to establish what is unestablished is itself unestablished and thus is no admitted (as proof). [74] Even if self-awareness is admitted and the memory is a genuine remembrance (of self-awareness), still it is indeed unacceptable that a memory that remembers like this establishes self-awareness since the experience of self-awareness and the memory of that event are different. It would be the same asthe production of a memory in the mental continuum of someone who never knew the event. This argument that distinguishes self-awareness and memory effectively counters any other particular attempt at

establishing cognition of a self. [75] But on the other hand, according to Madhyamikas, a memory is not distinct from the previous remembered experience of an object. Thus, one's memory is in the form "I saw . . . ." This is also the common convention of the worldly.
[76] Thus, if self-awareness is not real, what will apprehend the dependent phenomena you accept? The actor, its action, and its object are not identical. Thus, it is inadmissible that a cognition can apprehend itself.
[77] If there were real things that were of a dependent form and were unproduced and unknowable, then why not also accept the existence of the son of a barren woman? What harm could the son of a barren woman inflict on others?
Objection: [78] Since what is dependent does not exist in any way whatsoever, what can be the cause of conventional reality?
Reply: Through your attachment to substances, you forsake all the ordered structure of the everyday world. [79] There is no means of finding peace for those who are not treading the path taught by Nagarjuna. Such people have failed to grasp the distinction of conventional and true reality, and thus liberation lies beyond their reach. [80] Conventional usages are the means, and seeing reality from the ultimate point of view arises by those means. Through their misconception, those who do not understand the distinction between the two truths tread a false path.
[81] Unlike you Yogacharas, who affirm dependent things as ultimately real, we Madhyamikas do not accept that even for conventional reality. Concerning the conventional we say "Even though things do not (truly) exist, they do exist (conventionally)." We do this for a purpose (i.e., to lead others to liberation). [82] The things of the conventional world do not (truly) exist for the enlightened disciples, who have abandoned the bodily aggregates and have found peace. But conventional things do exist for the worldly in the everyday sense. If they did not so exist, we would not maintain that they do exist in a qualified sense. [83] If the world does not contradict your position, then (use it to) refute conventional perceptions. Debate with the world, and after this we will side with the winner.
[84] Bodhisattvas on this stage of the path called "Directly Facing the Realm of Truth" perceive the three realms of existence as nothing but consciousness. They negate any view of an eternal self or creator of the world. Because of their understanding, they conceive the creator as nothing but mind (but do not affirm the Yogachara position that external objects are "nothing but mind"). [85] Like a lighting bolt shattering high mountain peaks, the omniscient Buddha spoke in the *Lankavatara Sutra* those diamond-hard words that crush the teachings of non-Buddhists in order to increase the wisdom of the wise. [86] In their own texts, non-Buddhists speak of a "person" or some other eternal entity as the creator. Because he did not see a creator of things, the Buddha taught the mind alone is the creator of the (conventional) world. [87] Just as a buddha is explained as "one whose knowledge of reality as it truly is is expansive," so the *Lankavatara Sutra* taught "nothing but mind" for the teaching "the mind alone is preeminent in the conventional world." But it is not the intention of the scripture to deny material form. [88] If the Buddha intended to deny material form when he said that the three realms are nothing but mind, then why did the Great Soul proceed to claim in the same scripture that the mind itself is produced from delusion and actions with karmic consequences? [89] The mind itself constructs the vast diversity of sentient and insentient forms in the world and the nonsentient environment containing them. He taught that the entire world is created by karmic action and that if the mind were terminated there would be no karmic actions. [90] Even though there indeed is material form, it, unlike the mind, does not have the capacity to create. Thus, in denying that there are any other creator but the mind, material form is not denied.
[91] For those who reside in mundane reality, the five bodily aggregates do exist conventionally. But

they do not appear to the yogin who is engaged in the development of the knowledge of reality as it truly is.

[92] If there were no material forms, then one should maintain that the mind exists. But if there is the mind, one should not maintain that material forms do not exist. The Buddha unqualifiedly rejected the ultimate reality of both of them in the Perfection of Wisdom texts, while in the Abhidharma texts he affirmed the conventional reality of both of them. [93] Even if you destroy the hierarchy of the two types of truth, the real phenomenon of consciousness without an object would not be established, for it has already been refuted. Thus, because of the hierarchy, it should be understood that from the very beginning things are in reality unarisen, but from the mundane point of view they do arise.

[94] In the *Lankavatara Sutra* it is taught that there are no external realities and that the diversity of the world is nothing but mind. The Buddha denied there are material forms to those who were very attached to material forms, but the meaning of such teachings is only provisional (and not final). [95] The Buddha said provisional things, and it is only admissible to interpret it that way. In addition, the authority of this passage clearly shows that scriptures of like kind are also provisional in meaning.

[96] The buddhas have taught that the refutation of an inner knower is easily accomplished once there are no objects of cognition. If there are no self-existent objects of cognition, then the negation of consciousness is established (since it would have nothing to know). Thus, the buddhas start by negating the objects of cognition. [97] Thus, one must proceed accordingly when interpreting textual authority. Scriptures whose subjects are something other than "reality as it truly is" are provisional and must be understood as such and interpreted accordingly. Those texts that speak of emptiness are to be understood as final in their meaning.

The Non-Arising of Phenomena from Both Themselves and Others and Without a Cause

[98] Turning to the third option for arising: production from both something itself and another thing is not acceptable because of the flaws already explained (for production from oneself or from another). It cannot be maintained either from a conventional point of view or from the point of view of what is truly real because neither type of production can be maintained individually.

[99] Turning to the fourth option for arising: if there were production without any cause at all, then things could be produced from anything whatsoever anywhere at any time. So too, then worldly people would not even gather seeds by the hundreds in order to grow rice. [100] If the world itself were without any causes, nothing within it could indeed be apprehended, just as the color and smell of a (nonexistent) lotus growing in the sky are not apprehended. But the world is apprehended in all its rich diversity, and thus it must be accepted that the world, like the mind, arises from causes. (That is, the perception of things involves causes, and so if there were no causes in the world, perceptions could not occur. Since perceptions do in fact occur, there must be causes.)

[101] The primary elements of the material world are not characterized by self-nature, like what serves as the object of your (alleged) cognition. And when your mind is obscured by an impenetrable darkness concerning the nature of this world, how can you accurately comprehend the next? [102] When you materialists reject the existence of a next world, this is a distorted belief about the nature of what can be known — forthis belief holds that possessing a body is the basis of existing. Thus,

whenever you assert selfexistence, it is of the primary material elements.[103] The way in which the primary material elements are not self-existent has already been explained, insofar as the preceding constitutes a general refutation of production from onself, another, both, or without a cause. Even though these elements were not specifically discussed, how then could they be self-existent?

Summary of the Refutation of Self-Existence

[104] All entities are without self-existence since nothing arises from itself, another entity, both, or without a cause. But objects give a false appearance because the world is shrouded with a dense delusion as though by a mass of clouds. [105] Because of an eye-defect, one mistakenly perceives hair, two moons, the color of a peacock's tail, or a swarm of bees (where there are none). In a similar manner, because of the influence of delusion, the naive, while perceiving the diversity of the world, see compound phenomena. [106] Karmic actions arise in dependence on delusion,and in the absence of delusion such actions do not arise. Indeed, only those with learning understand this. The wise, who have burned away the thick clouds of delusion with the sun of their noble minds, have penetrated emptiness and are liberated.

Objection : [107] If in reality things do not exist, then they would be like the son of a barren woman: nonexistent even conventionally. But because this is not the case (since they do exist conventionally), they must have selfexistence.

Reply : [108] Your objection should be raised first with those who suffer from an eye-defect since objects like hair appear to them even though the objects are unarisen even conventionally. After you have explained this phenomenon, then raise your objection with those who suffer from the defect of the root-ignorance. [109] When one perceives unarisen things such as dreams, the castle of the heavenly musicians, a mirage, a magician's trick, or a reflection, the things are equally nonexistent. But how could one perceive them since you claim they do not differ from what does not exist, e.g., a son of a barren woman? It is inadmissable. [110] In reality, things are unarisen — they are not like the son of a barren woman since they are perceived conventionally. Thus, your argument is not convincing. [111] The son of a barren woman does not arise from itself either in reality or conventionally. So too, all things do not arise from themselves either in reality or conventionally. [112] Thus, the Buddha declared that all phenomena from the very beginning are at peace, since they lack arising, and by their nature completely unentangled with suffering. Thus, there is no arising. [113] For example, a pot does not exist in reality, but it does exist conventionally. All entities are the same in this way, and thus one cannot conclude thatthey are the same as the son of a barren woman.

[114] Because entities do not arise from such thingsas Ishvara the creator, from themselves, from another, from both, or without a cause, they arise from dependence on other things. [115] And because things arise through dependence, conceptualizations cannot withstand analysis. Thus, the reasoning from dependent-arising completely slashes the net of mistaken views. [116] If entities did really exist through self-existence, then conceptualizations would be acceptable. But a thorough analysis reveals that things are not self-existent, and if there are no self-existent things conceptualizations are unacceptable, just as there can be no fire without fuel. [117] Ordinary people are bound by their conceptualizations, but yogins who do not produce conceptualizations attain liberation. The wise have said that analysis results in the terminations of conceptualization.

[118] The analysis of Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way* is not undertaken out of an attachment to debate — it teaches reality as it truly is for the purpose of liberation. If while fully explaining reality other philosophical schools are destroyed, this cannot be construed as a flaw. [119] Attachment to one's own views and aversion to the views of another is itself to conceptualize. If one analyzes without attachment or aversion, one will swiftly attain liberation.

The Selflessness of a Person

[120] Perceiving that all mental afflictions and delusions without exception arise from the view of a real, substantive individual, and having identified the self as the object of this view, yogins undertake a negation of the self. [121] The self as conceptualized by Samkhya philosophers is eternal, nonactive, without qualities, a non-creator, and an experiencer (of the objects of knowledge). The system of these non-Buddhists evolved into different schools through minor variations on this view of the "self."

[122] A self like this is utterly unreal because it is unproduced like the son of a barren woman. In addition, it is also incorrect that this is the basis for clinging to a sense of "I." It is considered by us to be nonexistent even conventionally (i.e., there is no transcendental, Samkhya-like self even conventionally). [123] Indeed, all the characteristics that are ascribed to the "self" by non-Buddhists in all their texts are all countered by the argument that (this self) is unarisen, as they themselves admit. Thus, the self also does not have any characteristics (and thus is not real). [124] Thus, there is no self that is different from the bodily aggregates since the apprehension of a self cannot be established independently of the aggregates. Nor is the self considered to be the basis for the conventional sense of "I" because the view is inapplicable (i.e., the everyday sense of a person is not based on a metaphysical theory). [125] And an eternal, unarisen self is not perceived even by those who have wandered for eons in rebirths as animals. But they clearly still cling to a sense of "I." Thus, there is no self separate from the aggregates.

[126] Because no self can be established apart from the bodily aggregates, the self is only the bodily aggregates — material form (i.e., the physical body), feelings, consciousness, perceptions, and dispositions. But some Buddhists maintain that the five aggregates themselves are the basis for the view of a self, while others maintain that nothing but consciousness is the basis. [127] If the bodily aggregates are the self, then because the aggregates are many there would also be many selves. The self would also be a real substance, and cognition of the self would not be erroneous. [128] At the moment of attaining nirvana, such a self would then indeed be annihilated, and prior to attaining nirvana, the self would arise and cease every moment. Thus, since the actor is destroyed (in each moment), there would be no karmic fruit of his previous actions for him, and thus one self would experience the karmic fruit of another self's actions.

Objection: [129] There is no flaw, for in reality there is a continuity of the selves throughout change.

Reply : The flaws in positing a continuum were previously analyzed (v. 61). Thus, it is incorrect that the bodily aggregates or the mind alone is the self, although this is one of the questions such as whether the world comes to an end or not that the Buddha left unanswered.

[130] Indeed, if the bodily aggregates or the mind were the self, then when yogins perceive that there is no self, they would also perceive the nonexistence of all things (i.e., all conventional things would be seen as totally nonexistent, just like the self). But if they abandon (the concept of) a permanent self, then the self consequently could not be the mind or the bodily aggregates. [131] Thus, when yogins perceive that there is no self, they would not comprehend the physical body and the other aggregates as they really are. (That is, they would still be thinking in terms of a self.) And when the yogins direct their attention to physical bodies,they would form attachments and so forth and thus not comprehend their true nature.

Objection : [132] The bodily aggregates are the self because the Buddha has taught "The bodily aggregates are the self."
Reply: This is simply rejects (the thesis) that the self is something other than the aggregates. For in other scriptures it is taught that the self is not the physical body (or the other bodily aggregates). [133] In sum, since other scriptures state that the five bodily aggregates are not the self, the teaching of this scripture does not proclaim that the bodily aggregates are the self.
Objection: [134] When we maintain that the aggregates are the self, we mean the combination of the aggregates, not any aggregate individually.
Reply: (The Buddha said the self is a master, subduer, and witness, but) the collection is not a master, subduer, or witness, and thus the collection is not the self. [135] A chariot is a collection of parts, and the self is comparable. The scriptures say that the self is dependent on the aggregates, and thus the self cannot be equated with the collection of aggregates. [136] If you assert that the self had the shape of the combination of aggregates, then we reply that the self would have material form since only form has shape, and thus for you form alone would be the self. Thus, that collection of the mind and so forth would not be the self since these aggregates do not have any shape.
[137] It is incorrect to claim that the acquirer (i.e., the self) and what is acquired (i.e., the collection of aggregates) are the same. If this were so, then doer and the deed would be the same as well (and so the doer cannot do the deed). And if you think that there can be a deed without a doer, this is not so: with no doer, there is no deed.
[138] The Buddha taught that the self is dependent on the six elements — earth, water, fire, wind, consciousness, and space — and the sense-fields (i.e., the sense-organ and its object) of vision and so forth. [139] In addition, he taught that the self depends on the mind and its components. Thus, the self is not these elements collectively or any one of them separately. Thus, these cannot be the basis of clinging to (a belief in a) self.
Objection: [140] When one attains selflessness, (only the view of) a permanent self is abandoned.
Reply: But you do not consider a permanent self to be the basis of the sense of self. How strange then to claim that the view of a real, substantive self would be uprooted by realizing selflessness! [141] On seeing a snake coiled in a recess of your house, your alarm is dispelled by thinking "Well, there is no elephant here," and you abandon any fearof the snake. Behold the credulity of our opponent!
[142] There is no self in the bodily aggregates, and there are no aggregates in the self. If they were different, such conceptualizations might be plausible, but since there is no difference (betweenthe self and the aggregates), there are no such conceptualizations. [143] It cannot be maintained that the self possesses material form because the self does not exist. Thus, the notion of "ownership" cannot apply. In addition, the relation of self and the physical body is not like either someone possessing something different such as a cow or possessing something identical such as one's body. But the self is neither different nor identical to the physical body.

[144] The self is not the physical body, nor does the self possess the body. The self is not in the body, nor the body in the self. The other four aggregates are to be understood according to these four relations. Thus, altogether, there are twenty views of a self. [145] These views are the towering peak of a massive mountain chain of views of a real, substantive self. They and the fundamental view of the self are completely shattered by the lightning bolt of realizing selflessness.
Objection: [146] The "person" is a real substance. But it cannot be expressed as either identical to or different from the bodily aggregates, or as either permanent or impermanent. The person is an object of the cognitions of the six senses. It is the basis for the sense of "I."
Reply: [147] That the mind is distinct from the material form is not "inexpressible" or "incomprehensible" — indeed, no real thing is inexpressible or incomprehensible. If the self is established as a real entity, then it would be just as established as the mind is and would not be inexpressible.
Objection: [148] A pot is not by its nature established as a real entity because it is inexpressible concerning (its difference from or identity to) its form.
Reply: So too, the relation of the self to the aggregates is also inexpressible, and thus one ought not to conceive the self as real.
Objection: [149] Cognition is not different from one's own self, but it is distinct from the physical body and the other aggregates.
Reply: You thus see two distinct aspects to any one thing, i.e, identity to the self and distinction from other things. These aspects of identity and distinction are perceived for any entity, and since the self does not have them the self is not real.
[150] Thus, the basis of our clinging to the sense of "I" is not a real entity. The self is not different form the bodily aggregates.Nor is it the same as the aggregates themselves, nor is it possess the aggregates. The self is established (as a conventional reality) in dependence on the aggregates. [151] The self is like a chariot: it cannot be maintained that a chariot is different from its constituent parts, or that it is not different fromthem, or that it possesses them, or that it is in the parts, or that the parts are in it, or that it is simply the collection of the parts (since it continues asthe parts are replaced), or that it is the shape of the parts. [152] If the chariot were simply the collection of its parts, then it would exist when the parts are scattered. (A pile of chariot parts do not constitute a chariot, which a functioning whole.) In addition, if there is no possessor of the parts, there are no "parts." (The items would exist but not be labeled "parts" unless they were parts of a chariot.) Furthermore, it is unreasonable that a chariot is the mere shape of the assemblage of parts (since the parts can be changed and the chariot remains).
Objection: [153] When included in the chariot, the shape of each part remains the same.
Reply: But then the chariot no more exists after being assembled then it did among the unassembled scattered parts. [154] If the shape of the wheels and other parts within the assembled chariot is different than it was before the chariot was assembled, then this difference would be perceived, but it is not. Thus, the chariot is not merely its shape.
Objection: [155] There is no real compound entity, but the shape is not itself a compound entity.
Reply: How could there be any shape if it depends on something nonexistent? [156] Although you maintain that, you should know that all results are produced in dependence on unreal causes and so have an unreal nature. All things arise in precisely that manner.
[157] Thus, it is inadmissible to assert that a cognition of a pot is a cognition of its form, which is analogous to the form of the chariot. Because there is no (real) production, material form and the other aggregates are not self-existent (and thus are not real). Thus, it is wrong to claim that the

aggregates possess shape (and thus that there is a self that is either different or identical to what has shape).
[158] The existence of the chariot cannot be established either in reality or in the conventional sense by any of the seven options (listed in v. 151), but in the unanalyzed everyday sense, the chariot is imputed to exist in dependence on its parts. [159] Thus, the chariot has parts and pieces of parts, and so it is referred to in the world as an "agent." Forordinary people, this establishes that there is an acquirer of properties. Do not undermine the conventions that the world has accepted! [160] How can what is nonexistent according to the seven-fold analysis nevertheless be said to exist? Yogins do not find it real, and yet they easily penetrate what is real. Thus, one should accept what they establish here. [161] If the chariot does not exist, then there is no "possessor of the parts," nor are there any "parts." When the chariot is burned up, its parts no longer exist. So too, when the fire of discrimination burns the possessor of the parts, the parts themselves are consumed.
[162] Because it is supposed in the conventional world, there is a self that is dependent upon the basic elements and the six sense-fields, and it is an acquirer. Thereby, there is what is acquired, the act of acquiring, and the agent of acquiring. [163] But because there is no (real) entity, the self is neither constant nor varying, neither arisen nor ceasing. It does not have the property of "permanence" and so forth, nor identity or difference. [164] Thoughts of clinging to an "I" continuously arise in all sentient beings, and thoughts of "mine" arise concerning what this "I" possesses — the self is what is taken to be this "I." This self arises through delusion and is taken for granted when not examined. [165] Because there are no actors, there are no actions. In addition, because there is no self, there is no "mine." Through perceiving the emptiness of "I" and "mine," yogins become completely liberated.

Return to the Issue of Non-Arising

[166] Pots, woolen cloth, armies, forests, garlands, trees, houses, carts, guesthouses, and so forth — these things and whatever else is perceived by ordinary people are to be understood as conventionally real because the Buddha has no quarrel with the world. [167] Qualities, parts, desires, defining-characteristics, fuel, and so forth; possessors of qualities or parts, a base for desire or the defining-characteristics, fire, and so forth — such objects are nonexistent: as shown by the chariot analysis, they do not exist in any of the seven ways. But they do indeed exist conventionally.

[168] A cause is a "cause" only if it produces an "effect." If no effect is produced, then without that production there is no "cause." So too, effects are only produced if there are causes. Thus, (if you want to establish either as real), please state what comes from what and which of the two comes first. [169] If as you assert the cause produces the effectthrough contact, then at the moment of contact they become a single potentiality, and thus the producer is not different from the effect. Or if thecause and effect are distinct, then the cause is not different from a non-cause. And once these two alternatives have been refuted, there is no possibility to consider. [170] If you claim that a cause cannot produce an effect, then there is nothing to be referred to as "an effect." In addition, a cause separated from an effect is a non-cause, and such a thing is nonexistent. Because we maintain that both cause and effect are like a magician's tricks, we thus are subject to no flaw in our argument, and things experienced in the conventional world remain existing.

Objection : [171] Does your refutation of cause and effect negate what is to be refuted by your refutation by contact with it or not? Does not the flaw you just set forth apply to you? (That is, if they

connect then the refutation and what is refuted are exactly a case of cause and effect; and so if cause and effect are not real, then the refutation fails. But if they do not connect, then they do not have contact and there is no refutation.) When you speak like this, you merely defeat your own position. Thus, your refutation is incapable of refuting. [172] You deny the real existence of all entities with your caviling, and the consequences apply equally to your own words. The noble ones would never agree with you. Because you lack any position of your own, you make use of any sort of refutation just for the sake of debate.

Reply : [173] Arguments refute without making contact with what is refuted. Or if you say they do make contact, where is the flaw? The flaw is only in any position holding self-existence. But this consequence is of no concern to us since we hold no position (asserting self-existence). [174] According to you, the orb of the sun is self-existent. But changes in the shape of the orb also appear in its reflection, as seen during an eclipse and so forth. But to speak of the sun and its reflection "connecting" or "not connecting" is obviously unreasonable. Nevertheless, as a mere dependent conventional reality, the sun's reflection does arise. [175] So too, even though an image in a mirror is not real, it is useful for anyone who desires to make himself attractive, and in this way it does exist conventionally. In the same way, arguments about what is real are an image by which one has the ability to clean the face of wisdom. They are not simple, but you should understand and know what is being established.

[176] If what our arguments show and what is to be understood by them have indeed been established, and you understood the nature of what has been established, you would not apply your reasons of "contact" and so forth because they are futile. [177] It is quite easy to understand what is meant by the lack of self-existence within all things, but it is much more difficult to comprehend existing through "self-existence." So why do you ensnare the world in a web of your faulty reasoning?

[178] Understand well the above refutation (vv. 168-70)! When we reply (vv. 173-77) to your position concerning "contact"and so forth (vv. 171-72), we were not trying to offend. Any additional positions of yours are to be explained by the same (seven-fold) method given above(in v. 151).

The Sixteen Types of Emptiness

[179] For the liberation of all sentient beings, selflessness was divided by the Buddha into two types: selflessness of the basic phenomena of the experienced world, and selflessness of persons. In addition, the Buddha divided the two types further into many categories since he differentiated his disciples (according to their specific needs). [180] In this elaborated version, he explained sixteen types of emptiness. In addition,he condensed these sixteen into four types, all of which the Mahayana accept.

(1) [181] Because of their nature, the (conventional) eye is empty of a (self-existent) eye. The ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are also described in this manner. [182] Because the six sense-faculties are neither permanent nor ceasing, they have no self-existence. This is "internal emptiness."

(2) [183] By their self-nature, material forms are empty of (self-existent) forms. Sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental phenomena are also the same in nature. [184] The absence of any self-existence in

forms and the others is called "external emptiness."

(3) The absence of self-existence in each of the above two types is called "internal/external emptiness."

(4) [185] The absence of any self-existent nature within any thing is called by the wise "emptiness." This emptiness is also considered to be empty of a self-nature labeled "emptiness." [186] The emptiness of what is called "emptiness" is called "the emptiness of emptiness." It is explained in this manner for the purpose of stopping any understanding of emptiness as an entity. (In short, emptiness is not itself a self-existent reality.)

(5) [187] The directions of space are vast since they pervade without remainder the worlds as well as sentient beings dwelling therein and since, by being without bounds, they exemplify the boundlessness (of the four "sublime attitudes" — friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy in the happiness of others, and even-mindedness). [188] The emptiness of the ten directions (up/down and the eight compass points) is called "the vast emptiness." It is explained in this manner for the purpose of stopping any understanding of the vastness of space as self-existent.

(6) [189] Nirvana is the ultimate because it is thesupreme goal. Its emptiness is called "the emptiness of the ultimate truth/reality." [190] The emptiness of the ultimate was taught by those who know the ultimate for the purpose of stopping any understanding of nirvana as an entity.

(7) [191] The three worlds (i.e., the realm of desireand the "formed" and "unformed" meditative realms) are definitely described as "compound" because they arise from causes and conditions. Their emptiness is called "the emptiness of compound things."

(8) [192] Those entities that arise or that endure are impermanent. Those entities that are not these are uncompounded. Thus, the emptiness of the latter is "the emptiness of the uncompounded."

(9) [193] What is without the extremes of being either eternal or totally nonexistent are categorized as "transcending the extremes." Their emptiness is called "the emptiness of what has transcended the boundaries."

(10) [194-95] The cycle of rebirths is described as being without beginning or end since it has neither an initial arising nor a final end. It is without coming or going, like a dream. Its emptiness is referred to in the treatises as "the emptiness of what is without beginning or end."

(11) [196] What is rejected is defined as "what is cast aside and abandoned." To not reject something is not to cast it aside and abandon it. [197] The emptiness of what is not rejected is called "the emptiness of what is not rejected."

(12) [198] The self-nature of compound entities is not invented by disciples, self-enlightened buddhas, bodhisattvas, or fully-enlightened buddhas. [199] Thus, the self-nature of compound entities is called their "own-nature." The emptiness of this is called "the emptiness of own-nature."

(13) [200-201] The eighteen material elements (i.e., the six sensefaculties, six sense-objects, and six

sense-cognitions), the six sense-organs, and the six sensations that arise from them, material form and the formless, the compound and the uncompound — the emptiness of all of these basic phenomena of the experienced world is called "the emptiness of all basic phenomena."

(14) Form and the other aggregates are without any self-existent nature.

Their emptiness is called "the emptiness of any defining self-characteristic." [202] Material form has the defining-characteristicof color and shape;
feeling has the self-nature of experience; perception apprehends definingcharacteristics; mental dispositions are what buildactions of body, speech,
and mind. [203] The defining-characteristic of cognition is awareness of
distinct objects. The bodily aggregates have the defining-characteristic of
suffering. The eighteen basic elements are like poisonous snakes in nature.
[204] The Buddha has declared the sense-fields to be the gateway to arising,
and dependent-arising has the defining-characteristic of being compound. [205] The defining-characteristic of perfected generosity is giving. The
defining-characteristic of proper conduct is not tormenting others. The
defining-characteristic of patience is the lack of anger. The definingcharacteristic of vigor is lack of sloth. [206] The defining-characteristic of
concentration-meditation is mental focus. The defining-characteristic of
wisdom is lack of attachment. These are distinguishing characteristics of the
"six perfections." [207] The Buddha, the perfectly knowing one, has declared
that the defining-characteristic of concentration-meditation, the four sublime
attitudes, and other formless meditative absorptions is the lack of disturbance (by feelings and thoughts).
[208] The thirty-seven factors that lead us toward enlightenment have
the defining-characteristic of contributing to the escape from the cycle of
rebirth.
(The defining-characteristics of the three gateways to liberation are:)
first, "emptiness" has the defining-characteristic of "isolation" (from any
defilements resulting from ideas of real entities) due to correct perception.
[209] Second, the "signless" has the defining-characteristic of serenity. Third,
the "wishless" has the defining-characteristic of the lack of suffering and
confusion. The full deliverances have the defining-characteristic of contributing to liberation.
(The defining-characteristics of the fruit of the path are these:) [210] The
ten powers are said to have the nature of certitude. The nature of a buddha's
fearlessness in rescuing sentient beings from suffering is immutable steadfastness. [211] The superlative knowledge of a buddha has the definingcharacteristic of continuous confidence and so forth. What brings great
benefit to all sentient beings is called "great love." [212] Great compassion
rescues those immersed in suffering. "Sympathetic joy" is the definingcharacteristic of "great joy." "Even-mindedness" has the defining-characteristic of being unadulterated in its impartiality. [213] The qualities considered
unique to a fully-enlightened buddha are eighteen in number. Because they
cannot be removed from a buddha, their defining-characteristic is being

undivertable. [214] Direct perception is considered the defining-characteristic of the omniscient knowledge of a buddha. Other knowledge is limited in its scope and is not considered direct perception.
[215] The emptiness of any defining-characteristic of the compound and the uncompound is also "the emptiness of any defining self-characteristic." (See v. 202.)
(15) [216] The present does not endure, and the past and future do not exist. None of these three times can be observed. They are referred to as "the unobservables." [217] What is unobservable is completely without any selfnature of its own and is neither eternally enduring nor ever decaying. This is called "the emptiness of the unobservable."
(16) [218] Because entities arise from causes and conditions, they do not have the self-nature of being compounded. The emptiness of these entities of being compounded is called "the emptiness of the absence of entities." (The condensed list of the types of emptiness is:) (I) [219] In short, the word "a being" refers to the five bodily aggregates. Their emptiness is called "the emptiness of beings."
(II) [220] Again in short, non-entities are declared to be uncompounded phenomena. Their emptiness is called "the emptiness of non-entities." (III) [221] Self-nature is not invented, and so it is referred to as "selfnature." The lack of self-existence in self-nature is called "the emptiness of self-nature."
(IV) [222] Whether or not any buddha come in the world, all entities are empty. This is proclaimed "the emptiness of being other (than conventionally real)." [223] In the school of the Perfection of Wisdom texts, "the emptiness of being other" is called the "reality-limit" and the "such-ness of things."

Conclusion

[224] Bodhisattvas radiate light through the brilliant ray of wisdom and see that the three realms of existence from the beginning are unproduced as clearly as they see a medicinal herb in the palm of their hand. And through the power of conventional truth, they go to the cessation of rebirths. [225] Even though their minds rest constantly on cessation, still they cultivate compassion for all sentient beings who are without a protector. Those born from the Buddha's speech and self-enlightened buddhas will later be outpaced by their wisdom. [226] Like the king of swans, they soar ahead of the common flock, spreading their broad white wings of conventional and ultimate truth. Held aloft by the strong wind of virtue, they fly to the excellence on the far shore of the ocean of the Buddha's qualities.

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Notes

[1] Bodhisattvas are beings set on the path to becoming not merely enlightened but fully-enlightened buddhas. At this stage of their path, they have attained freedom from the cycle of rebirths controlled by karmic actions, but they freely accept rebirth to help others and advance toward buddhahood.

[8] Non-arising (*an-utpada*): something that arises is considered *produced* from something, either itself or something else or both or from nothing, and so what does not so arise is unproduced. Hence, the term can also be translated "not produced." To Madhyamikas, what is real is in fact non-arisen.

[10] The Samkhya position — the effect is present but unmanifested in the cause and so is identical to the cause — may seem strange. One way to make it seem plausible today is to think of the Samkhya stance as a type of *reductionism*: no new substance or structure is created in the emergence of, for example, cream from milk, and so the effect is really nothing but the cause and is present in the cause before it is made manifest by some action.

[21] Here Chandrakirti invokes the four options (see Jones 2010: 155-58). Also note that the dichotomy of "it exists" and "it does not exist" supposedly logically exhausts all ontological options for the opponent.

[22] On the two truths, see Jones 2010: 147-48. The difference for Nagarjuna, in a nutshell, is between statements made from the point of view of ultimate ontological status of things and those made about conventional divisions within the world of appearances. To Chandrakirti, the ultimate truths are not statable. (See the Essay.)

[23] The word for "conventional truth (*samvriti*)" comes from a root (*vri*) meaning "to conceal." It conceals the true ontological nature of things.

[42] Note that Chandrakirti defends that ethics and the path to enlightenment are possible. For any Buddhist it is important that the ontology they advance supports soteriology.

[45] The Yogacharas are idealists who take conventional objects to be nothing but mind. Chandrakirti claims they are different in substance from the Madhyamikas.

[45] " *Vijnana*" usually means cognition, but here it means the mind in general. "*Alaya-vijnana*" is a "storehouse-consciousness," i.e., something changing but storing the karmic residue of past karmic actions. It is postulated by the Yogacharas to explain the continuity of a person.

[47] "*Prajnaptisad-vastu*" means "a thing designated as real."

[78] The "ordered structure of the everyday world" means the order of the same causes and conditions producing the same effects. Buddhists do not question that this order is *permanent* even if the contents of the phenomenal world are *constantly changing*.

[81] Thus, Chandrakirti accepts the conventional reality of entities.

[84] Bodhisattvas at this level reflect Yogachara teachings.

[117] The termination of conceptualizations (*kalpanas*) is connected to the end of conceptual

projection (*prapancha*), not the end of words or analysis.

[120] Through meditation, the *idea* of a self is negated — from the ultimate point of view, there is no self actually to negate.
[186] The "emptiness of emptiness" is not a new exotic ontological claim or some obtuse, esoteric mystery. Rather, it is a straightforward corollary of Madhyamaka metaphysics. (See Jones 2010: 142.) Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti are simply saying that "emptiness" is like any other concept: there is no selfexistent, real entity called "emptiness" corresponding to the term in the world any more than for any other noun. Nagarjuna claims "Those for whom emptiness is a view are said to be *incurable* (MK 13.8)" because they then take emptiness to be an entity existing by self-existence (since only such an entity is the subject of a view). Commenting on this, Chandrakirti gives the analogy of a man who, when being told by a shopkeeper "There is nothing to sell, so I can give you nothing," asks the merchant to sellhim the "nothing" (Pr 248). Also see Pr 495-96 below. Some Buddhists prefer the name "*nishsvabhavavada*" (the teaching of "being without self-existence") for the doctrine of emptiness to "*shunytata-vada*" since this avoids the possibility of seeing emptiness as an entity of some type.

[189] " *Artha*" means the "highest purpose, objective, or meaning." Like "*satya* (truth/real)," it has both epistemic and ontological dimensions. Here Chandrakirti equates nirvana with "*parama-artha*" — the ultimate truth or reality. Nagarjuna does not do that.

[199] "Self-nature (*svabhava*)" — here "*svabhava*" is used in its nontechnical sense, not in the philosophical sense of "self-existence." That is, it is the everyday sense of what something is without any grand metaphysical implications. (See the Essay on "*svabhava*.")

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The Clearly-Worded Commentary (Prasanna-pada)

Chapter 1: Conditions

. . . [12] Nagarjuna now undertakes to explain dependent-arising. It is characterized as "non-ceasing," and so forth. First, he advances the refutation of "arising" since he knows that if it is refuted then "ceasing" and the other characteristics are easily refuted. When other schools reflect on "arising," they conceive it as either arising from one thing itself, from another, from both itself and another, or without a cause. Nagarjuna claims that all of these conceptions are, upon examination, unsupportable (MK 1.1):

[1] No entities whatsoever are found anywhere that have arisen from themselves, from another, from both themselves and another, or from no cause at all.

Objection : [13] Now, once it has been specified that "nothing arises from itself," isn't it the case that the unwanted consequence must be accepted that "things arise from other things"?

Reply : This consequence does not follow. For it is intended that the negation not imply or assume an affirmation — arising from another will be equally negated. The reason for that negation may be ascertained in the *Entering the Middle Way*: "Thus, if something of any kind whatsoever has arisen, then the re-arising of what has arisen cannot be established (MA 6.8)."

Defending Buddhapalita Against Bhavaviveka

[14] Indeed, Buddhapalita declared "Entities do not arise from themselves because such arising would be pointless and because it would extend arising too far — for there is no purpose in things that already exist in themselves arising again, or if what already exists arises again, there never would be a time when it is not arising."

Bhavaviveka advanced the following criticism concerning that: "This

claim is unfounded. First, because no reason and example have been provided (as required in an independent argument to establish a claim). Nor has a refutation of the flaws alleged by the opponent been provided. [15] Second, there is an inconsistency within Buddhapalita's own position: his claim is in the form of a reductio ad absurdum — so, through the reversal of the meaning (in the proposition 'Entities do not arise from themselves'), an inferred conclusion and its reason having the reverse meaning appears (i.e., 'Entities arise from another entity'). Thus, arising would have a purpose (and thus not be futile) and arising would come to a stop."

We find Bhavaviveka's entire criticism to be unfounded. Why? First, it cannot be claimed that Buddhapalita has failed to supply a reason and an example. Why? Because the Samkhyas accept that entities arise from themselves. (This refers to the Samkhyas' doctrine thatan effect pre-exists within its cause and so is self-generated.) And thus they claim that what exists from itself has the attribute of

being the cause from which it arises. But we Madhyamikas see no purpose in repeated arising of what already exists and no infinite number of arisings. But neither do the Samkhya hold these doctrines. Thus, the Samkhyas' argument is indeed without justification (i.e., their doctrine of an effect existing within its cause does not support the latter two doctrines), and so Bhavaviveka's criticism is inconsistent.

But having been disputed by Bhavaviveka, may Buddhapalita not maintain his position by admitting a reason and example that could then be of use in the debate with the Samkhyas? Suppose again that the Samkhyas do not reject their thesis even because of the above dispute related to its inconsistency. But then again, the Samkhyas, due to pride, may not reject their thesis even if Buddhapalita had given them a reason and example. But, as it is said, there is no debating with the intoxicated.

[16] So too, Bhavaviveka displays his predilection for independent arguments that introduce inferences even when it is out of place. For a Madhyamika to formulate an independent argument on his own account is not acceptable because he does not accept the alternative propositions (allegedly entailed by the negating a opponent's proposition). As has also been stated by Aryadeva: "It is not possible even after a long time to level a charge against someone who has no proposition positing an entity as real, unreal, or both real and unreal (CS 16.25)." And as has been stated by Nagarjuna: "If there were any thesis whatsoever of mine, then this defect would be mine. However, there is no thesis of mine. Thus, there is no defect that is mine. If anything whatsoever were apprehended through perception, then there would be an affirmation or denial. But there is no such thing to perceive, and so there is no fault in me (VV 29-30)."

Thus, Madhyamikas advance no positive arguments. How then could Buddhapalita advance a positive thesis such as "The sense-fields are not produced from internal mental and physical causes" against which the Samkhyas could raise an objection? [17] What is the sense of a "thesis"? Does the thesis "There is no arising from itself" have the nature of an effect, or does it have the nature of a cause? What does this involve? If the former, then the thesis establishes what is already established (and this is an error in debates). If the latter, the sense of the thesis in fact is inconsistent with what Madhyamikas hold [18] since for all that arises there is the arising of precisely what exists as the cause. How could there be for Madhyamikas the reason "because an entity already exists" that either establishes what already exists or is inconsistent with what we hold? We seek to avoid any argument involving either of those two flaws. Thus, because the flawsalleged by the opponent do not occur, Buddhapalita does not need to specify its rebuttal.

Objection : Madhyamikas do not formulate positive arguments. Thus, since any thesis, reason, and example are not established, the object of the thesis is also not established, nor is the rejectionof the opponent's thesis established (on grounds common to both parties to the debate) for both parties. Nevertheless, in light of the need for an outcome in the debate concerning the alleged contradiction with the reason in the opponent's account for his thesis, there then is still needed from the Madhyamikas' account precisely a thesis free from defects in the thesis itself, its reason, and the example. Thus, there indeed exists this flaw in Buddhapalita not formulating a reason (for a positive argument) and not having refuted the flaws that Samkhyas allege the reason has.

[19] *Reply*: This is not so. Why? Because he who advances as a thesis an object must demonstrate to the other party the justification upon which he has perceived that object. This is done out of a desire

to create in the other party the conviction that is like his own conviction of the object. Thus, in the first place the correct procedure is that the demonstration of the object of the thesis accepted by yourself should be advanced only by you. And because no reason or example given by the Samkhya that is acceptable to Madhyamikas is available, the Samkhya merely advances a demonstration of the object of his own thesis that consists of basically only reasserting his own thesis. Thus, because of his acceptance of a proposition that has no justification and because he contradicts himself, the Samkhya is unable to generate a conviction in others. Thus, the clearest refutation of the Samkhya's thesis lies in his inability to demonstrate the object of his thesis. In such a situation, what then could be the purpose of pointing out the appearance of a fallacy by means of a reason as Bhavaviveka requires?

Objection : But still, the flaw of self-contradiction within an argument must be pointed out.
Reply: [20] This flaw too was in fact pointed out by Buddhapalita. This is so because he states that "Entities do not arise from themselves because of the futility of their arising." Here the word "their" generates the recognition of what according to the Samkhyas self-exists. Indeed, the statement "There is no purpose in the arising again of entities that self-exist" is an explanation of the concise statement of MK 1.1. And by means ofthis statement there is the perception of an example of the same nature that is also acknowledged by the Samkhyas, and it is accompanied by what is to be proved and a reason for it. By stating here "of entities that self-exist," there is the recognition of the reason and by stating "because of the futilityof their arising," there is the recognition of what is to be proved.
In this connection, consider this argument:
(1) Sound is impermanent (thesis)
(2) Because it is produced (reason)
(3) Like a pot (corroborating example)
(4) Just so is a sound produced (application)
(5) Thus, because it is produced, sound is impermanent (conclusion). Here, "it is produced" is the reason, as shown in the application. [21] So too here, an argument has been advanced by Buddhapalita: "Entities do not arise from themselves, because there is no purpose in the arising again of what is self-existent. Here the presence of what (Smakhyas believe) self-exists, such as a pot, is known not to depend on continuous arising. Thus, if the Samkhyas suppose that, for example, a pot self-exists even in its state as a lump of clay (i.e., in its cause), then this self-existing thing cannot arise." In this way, by means of the reason "because of self-existence" that is revealed in the application and that succeeds in negating continued arising, Buddhapalita has indeed pointed out the inconsistency in the Samkhya's argument from self-existence. So how can it be argued that Buddhapalita's procedure is unfounded because no reason and example were provided?
In addition, not only was there no failure by Buddhapalita to provide a reason and an example, there was no failure to refute the criticism leveled against him by the opponent. Why? Because Samkhyas do not posit the rearising of a pot whose nature has already appeared and thus is already present — for it is precisely this existing pot that is taken as the corroborating example because its form is already established, while what is to be proved by the negation of its arising is the pot that is still only potential in nature and whose form has not yet appeared. How then could the flaw in a thesis of establishing what is already established be suspected of Buddhapalita? And how could it be suspected that the reason is self-contradictory in substance?
Thus, also given the absence of the above flaw in Buddhapalita's demonstration of the invalidation of the Samkhyas' own argument, a response to the criticism of the opponent is not in fact lacking. Thus, it must be understood that Bhavaviveka's criticism of Buddhapalita's procedure is altogether

inappropriate.
[22] By the words “and so forth” in the phrase “thepot and so forth,” there is intended the inclusion of all things that arise. Thus, there is also no inconclusiveness concerning, for example, a cloth arising from threads.
Alternatively, the following form of argument is also available against the Samkhyas: for the proponent of the arising of something from itself, things do not arise from the self, except for the self itself, since the evolutes of primal matter already self-exist (in primal matter) like the self. This example of the self is provided as the example for the argument.
Objection: For the proponent of manifestation (of pre-existing evolutes out of their cause), the negation of arising does not invalidate our doctrine.
Reply: The term “arising” attacked here for “manifestation” does not fail to invalidate the Samkhya doctrine of manifestation since “manifestation” has been expressed here by the word “arising” due to the similarity (of the two concepts) with regard to the nonperception of something in its prior cause and perception once the thing has been produced or manifested.
Objection: How has such an analysis been achieved without the sense of “manifestation” being expressed?
Reply: [23] These statements of meaning, which contain great meaning, have indeed come into a general use that embraces “arising.” And once explained, they yield the essential meaning mentioned above. So nothing here should be supposed to have been left uncovered.

Defending the Reductio ad Absurdum Method

In addition, it is only the Madhyamikas’ debating partner who engages in the opposite of the reductio ad absurdum reasoning (in affirming the “Entities do not arise from themselves”). But we Madhyamikas are not involved in this way since there is no thesis of our own (concerning the arising of entities). And for this reason there is no contradiction with the established Madhyamaka position (of not affirming the self-existent reality of entities). And to the extent that there are a multitude of defects that occur for the opponent due to the occurrence of the opposite of the reductio ad absurdum reasoning, we recognize that too.

[24] So how then could the noble Buddhapalita, a follower of the flawless thought of the noble Nagarjuna, have made a (positive) statement (concerning the arising of entities) that is open to assault, so that his debating partner may be able to discover an assailable weak point? And when a reductio argument is advanced by the proponent ofthe absence of selfexistence against a proponent of self-existence, how could there occur to Madhyamikas any sense that is the opposite of a reductio ad absurdum argument? For, like watchmen and policemen, words do not overpower their own speaker. Rather, effective words conform to their speaker’s intent.

Thus, since the Madhyamikas’ reductio argument results solely in the negation of an opponent’s thesis (without advancingany positive thesis of their own), there occurs no sense that the opposite of the sense of the reductio ad absurdum argument. (That is, Madhyamikas are not committed to the opposite thesis of the one they negate.) Thus, the noble Nagarjuna has abundantly demolished the opponent’s proposition by the reductio argument, declaring: “No space is seen prior to the defining-characteristics of space — if space existed prior to its characteristics, then it would follow that it exists without its characteristics (MK 5.1)” and “If there were form apart from its cause, then the

form would be without a cause. But nowhere is there any effect without a cause (MK 4.2).” Thus, [25] “Nirvana is not an entity. If it were, it would be characterized by aging and death, for indeed there is no entity without aging and death (MK 25.4).”

Objection : Assuming that because Nagarjuna’s statements are meaningful, and given their great meaning, this is a motivating cause for producing many (positive) supporting arguments. Why then should we not assume that the noble Buddhapalita’s statements are also (positive arguments)? We assume that it is the procedure of commentators to formulate in detail supporting arguments.

Reply : This too is not so. For even when writing a commentary on his own *Overturning the Objections*, the noble Nagarjuna did not formulate supporting arguments. In addition, although Bhavaviveka accepted the Madhyamaka teaching, if he has formulated a positive argument out of a desire only to reveal his great expertise in the study of reasoning, then this is considered grounds for the accumulation by the reasoner of exceedingly many defects. Why? First, Bhavaviveka himself has stated in this matter that “[26] From the point of view of what is real, the sense-fields do not arise from the self, since they already exist like the self does.” But why did he add here the qualification “from the point of view of what is real”?

Objection : It is so because arising is not negated conventionally — it is accepted by Madhyamikas as the conventional truth of ordinary worldly people. In addition, if there were such a negation, what Madhyamikas accept would be invalidated (since you too accept the world conventionally).

Reply : This is unfounded because self-arising is not accepted by Madhyamikas even as a conventional truth. In the *Shalistamba Sutra*, it has been declared: “When a sprout, having a seed as its cause,arises, it is not selfproduced, nor is it produced from another thing, nor is it produced by both itself and another thing, nor does it arise withouta cause; nor is it created by the Lord Ishvara, time, bits of matter, primal matter, or its innate nature.” Also the*Lalitavistara Sutra* states: “If a seed is real, then so is the sprout. But the sprout is not the seed — it is neither different from the seed nor identical to it. So too, the seed, is not destroyed, nor is it eternal. This is the true nature of things.” And Nagarjuna declares: “Whatever arises dependently upon another thing is not that thing, nor is it different from that thing. Thus, it is neither annihilated nor eternal (MK 18.10).”

Objection : The qualification “from the point of view of what is real” is made in light of the opponent’s doctrine.
Reply: This also is unfounded since even on the level of conventional truth no such doctrine is accepted by Madhyamikas. [27] Those outside the Madhyamaka tradition, who have indeed diverged from the correct teaching of the doctrine of the “two types of truth,” are rebutted in both respects (i.e., from both the conventional and the ultimate points of view) and not solely from the latter point of view. To that extent, it is a good quality (i.e., it is good against both points of view). Thus, it is not correct to introduce this qualification even with regard to the opponent’s doctrine.
Nor do the ordinary people of the world even understand “self-arising” (i.e., they do not understand the very notion of how something could cause itself or the Samkhya doctrine of “manifestation”), so that the qualification might prove fruitful (for them). For ordinary people understand only this: that a result arises from a cause — they do not analyze whether there is arising from oneself, another, and so forth. This is what Nagarjuna has also established. In this way, it is ascertained that the qualification “from the point of view of what is real” is altogether unproductive.

In addition, if the qualification is accepted in a desire to reject the negation of arising on the conventional level, then by this account alone there would be the fallacy of a proposition having an unestablished subject (i.e., a reason without a topic to defend), or the fallacy of having a ungrounded reason (i.e., the reason does not support the subject of the thesis). For on our account Madhyamikas do not accept the existence of the field of the eye and the fields of the other senses from the point of view of what is real.
Objection: There is no fallacy because the eye and so forth have real existence on the conventional level.
Reply: What then does the qualification "from the point of view of what is real" qualify?
Objection: Employing the expression "from the point of view of what is real" qualifies the negation of the arising of the eye, and so forth as conventionally conceived from the ultimate point of view.
Reply: In that case, one should say [28] "From the ultimate point of view, there is no arising of the eye and so forth conventionally conceived." But no such claim is stated. In addition, even if this were stated, the opponents accept the eye and so forth as real substances andnot as nominal. Thus, from the point of view of the opponents, there is the fallacy of a proposition having an unestablished subject. Thus, Bhavaviveka's procedure is unfounded.

Qualifying and What is Qualified

Objection : Be that as it may, in the case of "Sound is impermanent," "sound" (in general rather than a particular sound) is what is qualified and "impermanent" is the qualifying property. Here then it is only the (unparticularized) generality of a property and something qualified that is apprehended, not a particular instance. [29] If one holds such distinctions, there exists no convention of inference and what is inferred. (Thatis, only when there a generality do we have to make mental constructs and inferences, not when we directly experience something.) Why? If we hold that sound arises from the four elements, what is qualified is not established for the opponent (here, the Hindu Vaisheshikas). On the other hand, if the opponent holds that sound is a quality of space, then it is not established for the Buddhists. Likewise, if Vaisheshikas, who assert the impermanence of sound, hold that sound is an effect of the elements what is qualified is still not established for the partner in this debate (who hold sound to be permanent). On the other hand, if sound is apprehended as something to be manifested (as the Mimamsakas hold), it is still not established for the Buddhists (since the effect would be in the cause). In the same way, if, according to this case, the cessation of sound is also produced by a cause (separate from sound), then again it is not established for the Buddhists (for whom anything does not need a separate cause to cease). But if, on the other hand, ceasing is not caused by a separate cause, then it is not established for the opponent. Thus, here too only the qualified thing will be held with the rejection of qualification in precisely the same way as the simple (unparticularized) generality of the property and what is being qualified.

Reply : This is not so. [30] For if the intended negation here is of "arising as a qualifying property to be established," then atthis very point Bhavaviveka has himself accepted the failure of what is being qualified: the subject of the negation is an entity that is recognized only through a mistaken awareness. Now "mistaken awareness" and "the absence of mistaken awareness" are indeed different. Thus, whenever what does not in fact exist is mistakenly seen as real — as are such things as (nonexistent) hairs that are seen by those afflicted with an eye-defect — how atthat time could even a minute part of

a truly real thing be perceived? But when, because of the absence of mistaking, nothing unreal is superimposed onto what is really there — as when such things as hairs in space are not superimposed onto the visual sense-field by one free of any eye-defect — how could even the most minute vestige of what is unreal then be perceived? If one did so, there would then be a conventional covering truth. For this reason, Nagarjuna has declared: "If anything whatsoever were apprehended through perception, then there would be an affirmation or denial. But there is no such thing to perceive, and so there is no fault in me (VV 30)." This is so because "mistaken awareness" and "the absence of mistaken awareness" are accordingly different. Thus, for those who know in the state that is free of mistaking, there is no possibility of a mistaken awareness — so how could the eye of conventional truth perceive the subject (of a positive argument and thereby provide agreement with the opponent)? For this reason, neither the fallacy of a proposition having an unestablished subject nor the fallacy of having an ungrounded reason is eliminated in Bhavaviveka's argument. Thus, our objection remains unrefuted.

Nor is the analogy to the eye and its field comparable to the argument establishing the impermanence of unqualified sound. For here the generality of sound and the generality of impermanence, where no particular instances are intended, are accepted by both parties. But in the same way, no generality of the eye has been admitted by both the advocate of emptiness and the advocate of non-emptiness (i.e., self-existence) on either the conventional level or from the point of view of what is in fact real. Thus, the instances are not similar.

Unestablished Reasons in Bhavaviveka's Arguments

The rule "Something must exist" used to point out a fallacy in a proposition having an unestablished object is also used when pointing out the fallacy of an ungrounded reason. [31] Thus, the sense discussed above was accepted by the reasoner Bhavaviveka himself. Why? Because his opponent has advanced this claim: "There are indeed causes and so forth that produce the sense-fields (thesis), for the Buddha has taught that (reason). What the Buddha has taught in a particular manner is so (application), e.g., 'nirvana is tranquil (example).'" But Bhavaviveka advanced this violation against it: "How do you understand the reason taught by the Buddha— as a conventional truth or as a truth from the ultimate point of view? If you think it is a conventional truth, then the meaning of the reason(i.e., 'because it is real') is not established even for you. On the other hand, if you think it is an ultimate truth, then consider what Nagarjuna states:'when no existing, nonexisting, or existing-and-nonexisting basic phenomena are produced — because of the elimination of anything existing, nonexisting, or both could cause a result — how is a cause admitted (MK 1.7)?' The plain meaning of this statement is that such a cause is indeed ineffective. Thereby, from the point of view of what is real, being an effect and being a cause are both unestablished. Thus, the reason has the quality of being unestablished in its meaning or being contradictory in its meaning." By this reasoning, Bhavaviveka himself has accepted that the reason is not established. Thus, even on Bhavaviveka's own account, there is no establishment of any argument having reasons that are treated as substantively real things.

Consider two examples of Bhavaviveka's reasoning: "From the point of view of what is real, there is no arising of the sense-fields from internal mental and physical causes, since the sense-fields are other than those causes, as in the case of a pot," and "[32] From the point of view of what is real,

conditions are not meant as ‘other conditions’ causing the sense-fields of the eye and so forth, since they do not exist as other than those, as with cloth and threads.” Thus, here the state of being “other” and so forth is not established even in Bhavaviveka’s own account.

Bhavaviveka also desires to point out the nonestablishment of the reason that the opponent stated as “Entities from internal mental and physical causes are indeed arisen because they are distinct objects according to conventional usage.” He himself responds: “But if, from the point of view of what is real, arising, motion, and so forth are established as entities for yogins with concentrated minds who discern the true nature of things with their eye of wisdom, then the reason given by the opponent is not established, precisely because by the negation of arising, motion is also negated.” Thus, also in the argument formulated by Bhavaviveka himself: “In the claim ‘From the point of view of what is real, non-motion is not moving because it has the quality of a completed journey,’ the substance of the reason (‘because it is like a completed journey’) is not established in the speaker’s own account.” And that the reason and so forth are notestablished even for yourself applies in arguments such as the following: “From the point of view of what is real, the eye that is the same in natureas material form does not see matter, since it is the eye-faculty (i.e., the non-physical mental faculty of sight) that is operative.” [33] Likewise from Bhavaviveka: “The (material) eye does not see (material) form because form is produced from the elements, like the eye’s own (material) form (MHK 3.41),” and “The earth has no selfexistent solidity because of its state as a great (non-self-existent) element, like the air (MHK 3.27).”

The Inconclusiveness of the Reason in Bhavaviveka’s Arguments

For the opponent, the reason “Because it is real” is inconclusive: do the sense-fields not arise from internal mental and physical causes because they already exist like the self, or do they arise from themselves like the pot (selfarising from matter)?

Objection : There is no inconclusiveness because the property is also the same for the pot and so forth (i.e., the property and the object have the same nature).

Reply : This is not so since this sameness has not be stated. *Objection*: [34] Isn’t it the case that when a criticism is directed against others’ arguments that it also applies in the same way to one’s own when applicable? Here, don’t the fallacy of a proposition having an unestablished subject, the fallacy of having a ungrounded reason, and so forth apply? Thus, since what is fallacious for both parties is not to be pressed against only one party, your entire criticism turns out to be unfounded.
Reply: These fallacies arise only for those advocating positive arguments (i.e., Svatantrika Madhyamikas). But we Prasangika Madhyamikas formulate no positive arguments — our arguments result only in the negation of an opponent’s thesis. In this way, having supposed that the claim “The eye sees form other than itself,” our opponent is confronted with the argument he himself acknowledges, and those who maintain that the quality of the eye’s not seeing itself still accept the quality of the eye seeing another form. To this, Nagarjuna advances this argument: “Whenever something is not seen by itself, then nothing else can be seen either (thesis), as with a pot (example). Now, for the eye there is no seeing of itself (reason); thus, for the material eye, there is no seeing of anything else material either (conclusion) (see MK 3.2).” Thus, the eye in seeing another form such as blue, which conflicts with it not being able to see itself, is opposed by the argument that the opponent

acknowledges. Since it precisely this that is pointed out by our arguments, how would the above fallacy affect our proposition, so as to incur the same flaw as the Svatantrikas?

Dignaga's Requirements for an Argument

Objection : Is an argument also invalid in the case of an argument that is acknowledged by only one of the two parties to a debate and not both?
Reply: It is, since there then is a reason that has been acknowledged only by yourself. [35] But this is not due to a reason acknowledged only by one's opponent. Indeed, this is what one finds with the views of the ordinary people: sometimes among the worldly there is a victory or defeat in a dispute declared by a witness held to be authoritative by both the plaintiff and defendant, and sometimes there is a victory or defeatdue only to one's own assertions. But neither victory nor defeat is due solely to the plaintiff's declarations. And just as it is in the worldly practice, so it also is with philosophical reasoning, since in the study of reasoning, worldly conventions are considered. And thus some say that an argument isnot invalidated only by the force of what one's opponent acknowledges since there is a desire to reject what the opponent maintains. The Buddhist logician Dignaga believes that what expresses what is certain for both parties to a debate serves as a proof or as a refutation, but what is acknowledged only by one of the two parties or expresses only what is doubtful cannot.
Thus, following the worldly procedure here, one should accept reasoning only of the kind just described. Thus, scriptural authority is invalidated not only by scriptural authority that is in fact acknowledged by both parties but also by that scriptural authority acknowledged only by yourself. But in an argument only for yourself, what is acknowledged by yourself is what completely prevails, and not what is acknowledged by both parties. [36] For this reason, stating a defining-characteristic of reasoning is without purpose. Why? Because for worldly students who do not know this, assistance comes from the buddhas by the establishment of what is acknowledged by yourself.
But enough of this side point! We will now explain the main topic at hand. (Chandrakirti then turns to the second line of MK 1.1.)

There is No Arising from Another Entity

Entities also do not arise from another entity since no other entities exist either. This Nagarjuna explains: "The self-existence of entities is not found in their conditions (MK 1.3)." Thus, because no other entities exist, neither do entities arise from another entity. Moreover, if another entity were indeed to come into existence from dependence on something else, thick darkness would arise from fire, and you must then agree that everything would then arise from everything, for "otherness" would also hold in the same way for all that is unproductive of effects (MA 6.14). Since this is so, it may be ascertained that arising from other entities is tobe negated. Buddhapalita in fact explains: "Entities do not arise from other entities since otherwise there arises the consequence that everything arises fromeverything."

Objection : Against this claim Bhavaviveka advances the following refutation: "[37] Because there is here a reductio ad absurdum, when a rejection of the property and its reason has been achieved, there is a contradiction with the previous proposition 'Entities arise from themselves, from both, or from no cause, since anything arises from something.' Otherwise Buddhapalita's reason 'Because there

arises the consequence that everything from everything' comprises neither a proof nor a refutation and so is irrelevant."

Reply : This objection is itself irrelevant in substance. It has no value since Bhavaviveka's objection in fact was advanced previously (see [14] and [15]) and was refuted, and since Buddhapalita's claim is itself a refutation because the meaning asserted by the opponent was refuted by it.

No further effort thus needs to be expended on this point.

There is No Arising from An Entity and Another

[38] Turning to the third line of MK 1.1.: entities do not arise from both themselves and other entities. This is so because of the fallacies stated above for both positions (i.e., that entities arise from themselves or from others) both apply to this claim as consequences. In addition, it is impossible for entities to arise individually. As Nagarjuna declares: "If suffering were created by oneself and another, it would be made by both (MK 12.9)."

There is No Arising Without a Cause

Turning to the fourth line of MK 1.1: entities also do not arise from no causes at all. This is so because of this consequence: "If there is no cause, then an 'effect' and its 'cause' are not found (MK 8.4)." And there also is this consequence: "If the world itself were without any causes, nothing within it could indeed be apprehended, just as the color and smell of a (nonexistent) lotus growing in the sky are not apprehended (MA 6.100)." Indeed, Buddhapalita states: "Entities do not arise from no cause, for then there would occur the consequence that everything always arises from everything." (That is, anything in the world would arise from anything else— e.g., rabbits from acorns. There would be no a fixed causal order.) Against this, Bhavaviveka has stated this refutation: "Here too there is a reductio ad absurdum. [39] Thus, if the sense of the statement is maintained as revealing the opposite property and reason, then this is expressed in the claim 'Entities arise from a cause since sometimes something arises somewhere, and since the effort undertaken to produce an effect yields fruit.' Thus, Buddhapalita's explanation is unfounded because of the fallacy mentioned above." But according to others (i.e., the Prasangikas), it is this claim byBhavaviveka that is unfounded in view of the previously expressed refutation.

A Creator God and Other Alleged Causes

It is also without foundation to include the god Ishvara as the cause of arising, for Ishvara and other alleged causes (such as time) are covered in the propositions of self-arising, arising from another, and arising from both (oneself and another) as discussed above.

Dependent-Arising and Scriptures of Provisional and Final Meaning

Thus, no arising has been established because it is impossible to conceive (of self-existent entities

arising). And because the arising (of real entities) does not exist, "dependent-arising" is established, qualified as itself without an arising, and so forth.

Objection : You claim that dependent-arising is qualified as itself without an arising and so forth, but the Buddha has declared: "Dispositions are conditioned by root-ignorance, and by the stopping of root-ignorance the mental dispositions are stopped." Also: "These dispositions are impermanent, having the properties of arising and ceasing. Having arisen, they can come to an end, and their pacification is blissful." Also: "[40] Whether buddhas arise or not, the true nature of the basic phenomena of the experienced world is fixed." Thus, the Buddha taught dependent-arising qualified by cessation and so forth — how then is there no contradiction with your claim that dependent-arising is qualified as "without an arising, and so forth"?

Reply : [41] Thus, since cessation and so forth are perceived for dependent-arising, it is the case that Nagarjuna composed the *Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way* to explicate the proper distinction between a canonical text of "provisional meaning" and one of "final meaning" (i.e., texts whose meaning must be explained further versus those whose plain meaning is accepted as definitive). As applied here: if that arising and so forth of dependent-arising has been stated, then this is not with respect to the real nature of the objects of true knowledge, but instead with respect to objects of knowledge of the eye of understanding impaired by the blindness of rootignorance.

Concerning seeing reality as it truly it, the Buddhahas stated: "The ultimate reality/truth is nirvana, which has the property of being free of error. Dispositions are false and deceptive." Also: "What has the property of being deceptive has the property of failing and is false — it is a magical trick (i.e., deceptive in its appearance and dependent on someone who creates it) and the babbling of a child. Here there exists no true 'thus-ness.'" Also: "Material form is like a ball of foam. Feelings are like a bubble. Perception is like a mirage. Dispositions are the hollow stem of a banana tree. Cognition is like a magical trick. So has the sun-like Buddha spoken. [42] A monk who strives with effort and analyzes these phenomena with awareness and attention day and night will attain the tranquil place, the quiet pacification of the conditions of dependent-arising, for phenomena are selfless."

By misunderstanding the teaching's purpose in this way, one may be in doubt as to which teaching has reality as it goal and is purposeful. And, due to a weak intelligence, one may misunderstand a teaching of "provisional meaning" as one of "final meaning." In order to remove doubt and error concerning these two kinds of meaning for worldly students, Nagarjuna undertook through argument and scriptural authority to compose the *Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way*. In that treatise, an argument concerning self-arising and so forth is presented in MK 1.1. Also: "The blessed one, the Buddha, has said 'Whatever is characterized by deception is false.' All phenomena that are compounded (i.e., assembled from parts) are characterized by deception and thus they all are false (MK 13.1)." Also: "The great sage, the Buddha, has stated that a limit to the past is not known. The cycling of rebirths is without beginning or end. Indeed, there is no beginning nor end to it (MK 11.1)." Also: "[43] In the *Discourse to Katyayana*, both 'is' and 'is not' (i.e., the extremes of permanent existence and total nonexistence) are denied by the blessed one who has made known both 'being' and 'nonbeing' (MK 15.7)." Nagarjuna also presented other scriptural authority.

In the *Akshayamatinirdesha Sutra*, it is stated: "Which texts are of provisional meaning and which of final meaning? Those taught to introduce the path to enlightenment are called of 'provisional

meaning.' Those taught to introduce the fruits of the path are called of 'final meaning.' When emptiness, the signless, the desireless, the absence of dispositions, the unborn, the unarisen, the absence of entities, theselfless, the absence of sentient beings, the absence of embodied beings, the absence of persons, the masterless, and gates of liberation are taught in texts, these are called of 'final meaning.'" [44] Similarly, in the *Samadhiraja Sutra*, it is stated: "The characteristic of a text of 'final meaning' is that one knows emptiness as taught by the Buddha. And, on the contrary, one in which a person, being, or self is taught, one knows all of these things as having a 'provisional meaning.'"

Thus, Nagarjuna has undertaken the explanation of dependent-arising to make known that the teaching of "arising" and soforth is false in its aim.

The Question of Ontological Nihilism

Objection : If, in the absence of arising and so forth, Nagarjuna undertook his treatise to make known the falsity of all phenomena, then since the false does not exist unwholesome actions do not exist, and thus miserable states of existence do not exist. Wholesome actions also do not exist, and thus pleasurable states of existence do not exist. And since pleasurable and miserable states of existence do not exist, no cycle of rebirths exists. Thus, all effort toward better rebirths or enlightenment is in fact futile.

Reply : It is only concerning conventional realities that we make known that the falsity of entities in their substance, since this is a counter-proposition to ordinary people's devotion to things as real. It is not the case that the noble ones who have done what is to be done apprehend anything that might be either false or true. In addition, do karmic actions and the cycle of rebirths exist for one who has apprehended the falsity of things? Such an enlightened one indeed apprehends neither the existence nor nonexistence of anything whatsoever.

[45] The Buddha declared in the *Ratnakuta Sutra*: "If one searches fo the mind, it is not found. What is not found is not perceived. What is not perceived is neither past, future, or present. What is neither past, future, or present is not self-existent. What is not self-existent cannot arise. What does not arise does not cease, and so on." One who does not understand the falsity of things because of his misperception devotes himself to the self-existence of entities that actually exist dependently. Since one is thus devoted to the idea that entities are real, one acts and is reborn in the cycle of rebirths; fixed in misperception, one is not destined to attain nirvana.

Objection : But since things are false in nature, can they be a cause for the purification of mental afflictions?
Reply: For example, a magically-conjured young woman will still cause negative actions for those who do not know her truenature, and a phantom of the Buddha will be a cause for purification for those who have planted a wholesome root. ([46] Chandrakirti then extensivelyquotes texts for this point:) Thus, entities that are false in nature too are the cause of mental afflictions and purification of the naive. ([47-50]Chandrakirti quotes an example from the *Ratnakuta Sutra* for this point:) Thus, the cause of purification of five hundred monks was accomplished by two phantom monks conjured up by the Buddha who were false in nature. ([50-54] Chandrakirti then quotes texts for this point:) Thus, in

this way, these entities are without self-existence and falsely created by one's own misperception, but they are the causes of mental afflictions for the naive. This is what is established. In *Entering the Middle Way*, how things that are false in nature are the cause of mental afflictions and purification can be ascertained in detail.

Return to the Question of Causation

Objection : If there is no arising of entities from themselves, others, both, or without a cause, how is it that the Buddha spoke of emotional dispositions being dependent upon root-ignorance?

Reply : This is the conventional reality, not what is in fact real. How is the condition of conventional reality to be stated? The determination of the conventional reality is through nothing but the dependency of things, not by assenting to any of the four propositions of MK 1.1. Assenting to any of the four propositions has the consequence of accepting self-existence. In addition, the propositions are unfounded. [55] If arising solely through the dependency of things is asserted to, because of the mutual connection of (the concepts of) "cause" and "effect," there is no establishment of things through self-existence. Thus, there is no doctrine of self-existence.

Thus, it is declared in the *Lokatitastava Sutra*: "It has been declared by speculative reasoners that suffering is caused by itself, by others, and by both itself and others, and that it is without a cause, but the Buddha has stated that it is produced dependently." Nagarjuna also declares: "An actor is dependent upon an action, and the action proceeds dependent upon an actor — we cannot see any other way to establish them (MK 8.12)." The Buddha declared precisely that in the *Madhyamaka-Shalistamba Sutra*: "Accordingly, the agreement concerning phenomena is this: because of the arising of this, that arises. Dispositions are dependent upon root-ignorance, cognition is dependent upon dispositions, and so forth."

The Question of Means of Knowledge

Objection : Does your conviction that entities do not arise proceed from a "valid means to knowledge" or not? If it does, these questions must be answered: how many valid means of knowledge are there? What are their defining-characteristic? What are the objects of the valid means of knowledge? Do the means arise from themselves, others, both, or without a cause? But if your conviction does not proceed from a validmeans of knowledge, it is unfounded, since knowledge of objects of valid knowledge depends on valid means of knowledge. Indeed, something unknown cannot become known without a valid means of knowledge — so if something is unknown because of the absence of a valid means of knowledge,how can there be a correct conviction? Thus, there is no foundation for saying "Entities do not arise."

In addition, my conviction that all entities exist has the same source as your conviction that all entities do not arise. [56]So too, like your conviction that all phenomena do not arise, my conviction is that all entities do arise. But if for you there is no conviction that "No entities arise," then it is altogether futile to undertake the composition of a treatise since it is impossible to communicate to another what one is not convinced of.

Thus, all entities do exist without being negated.
Reply: If a conviction exists, it does indeed proceed either from a valid means of knowledge or not. But there is no conviction on our part that entities do not arise. Why? If there were a contrary conviction here in nonarising, then there would exist a conviction related to it as a counterproposition. But when there is no contrary conviction, how could there be a conviction as its opposite? For there is no further dependence on what is related as with "shortness" and "longness" of a nonexistent donkey's horn. (Since there is no such entity, there is nothing to deny.) [57] Thus, if there is no conviction, of what then can we posit the establishment? Or, how can there be a number, a defining-characteristic, or object for nonexistent valid means of knowledge? We cannot speak of all of this by asserting the arising from oneself, another, or both, or without a cause.
Objection: If thus there is no conviction at all, how do you comprehend this sentence: "Entities do not exist through themselves, or another, or from both, or through no cause"?
Reply: For the ordinary people, this sentence is a conviction with a justification acknowledged solely on their own account, not for the noble ones.
Objection: But for the noble ones there is then no truly existing justification.
Reply: By whom could it be said that a justification exists or not? What is in fact real is a matter of silence for the noble ones. Thus, for that realm, how can there be any conceptual projection onto what is real so that there might be either a justification or no justification?
Objection: But how then can they inform ordinary people in the world about reality from the ultimate point of view if the noble ones present no justification?
Reply: The noble ones do not present any justification by means of the conventional usages of the world. Instead, they have recourse to the justification acknowledged precisely by ordinary people in order to make the higher type of truth known to others. It is with this conventional-level justification that they inform the ordinary people of the world. For example, people who are devoured by passion and are affected by miscomprehension do not comprehend the impurity in the body, although it is there, and by superimposing an image of purity that is in fact unreal onto the body they are entirely polluted. And in order to dispel passions, a phantom or a god conjured up by the Buddha might reveal the flaws of the body that were previously concealed by the perception based on a mental discrimination that the body is pure, saying that "In the body there are hairs and other impure things." And by being free from this (erroneous) perception of purity, these people are able to achieve detachment.
[58] So also here: the ordinary people's eyes of understanding are afflicted with the blindness of root-ignorance, having superimposed a mistaken self-existence onto entities, although self-existence has the nature of being completely unperceived by the noble ones. Thereby, the worldly are entirely polluted to the highest degree possible with regard to any particular feature in any place.
And the noble ones now make this known to ordinary people by means of a justification acknowledged by these ordinary people themselves in this way: just as it is accepted by ordinary people that there is no arising from clay and so forth of an existing pot (i.e., an existing pot does not arise again), so too it should be accepted by them that there is no arising of anything that exists prior to its arising since it already exists. Similarly, just as it is accepted that there is no arising of a sprout from what has a different nature, as with a flame and coal and so forth, so too it should be understood that there is no (real) arising even from seeds and so forth as intended by you.
Objection: For us, immediate experience is what provides a justification for arising.
Reply: This also is unfounded since any such experience is false, like the experience of a double moon and so forth by someone affected with an eyedefect. Experience is itself something that

requiresto be established by a justification. Thus, the opponent's response is unfounded.
Thus, firstly, Nagarjuna undertook to compose chapter 1 of the *Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way*, starting with the claim "Entities are unarisen," as a counter-proposition to the mistakensuperimposition of selfexistence onto things. The remaining chapters of the treatise were undertaken to exclude some particular thing superimposed in some particular way. This was done for the purpose of conveying that there also is no particular thing at all that is real by arising dependently — e.g., a mover, what is moved over, and moving (MK 2) and the other subjects of the treatise.

Defining-Characteristics

[*Objection from Dignaga's school*]: What if it is only this mundane conventional usage of "valid means of knowledge" and "valid objects of knowledge" that is depicted by us in the treatises?

Reply : Then the result of this account has to be stated.
Objection: [59] What has been corrupted by poor speculative reasoners (i.e., the Hindu Nyayikas) concerning the defining-characteristic has been correctly stated by us.
Reply: This is also unfounded. If an erroneous defining-characteristic has been presented by poor speculative reasoners, then for ordinary people in the world there is a mistake in what has been defined, and for the purpose of correcting this, there should be a fruitful effort. But since this is not so, that effort has in fact been in vain, as has been stated above.
In addition, a flaw has been exposed by Nagarjuna in *Overturning the Objections*: if an understanding of the valid objects of knowledge depends on the valid means of knowledge, then by what are these valid means of knowledge determined (see VV 31)? (That is, by what valid means can we know the defining-characteristic?) Since this objection has remained unanswered, the indication of the correct defining-characteristic is not found.
In addition, Dignaga has stated that there is a pair of valid means of knowledge (direct perception and inference) that are in conformity with a particular self-characteristic (which for him is real) and a general characteristic (which is constructed by consciousness). (The particular characteristic is the object of direct perception; the general characteristic is the object of inference.)
Is there then something characterizable for which there is this pair of characteristics or not? If there is such a thing, then the two types of valid objects of knowledge are different from it — so how can there be a pair of valid means for knowing it? If there is no such thing, the characteristic then lacks any grounding and so does not exist — so again,how can there be a pair of valid means of knowledge? As Nagarjuna states: "Where no characteristics occur, no entity with characteristics occurs. And where there is no occurrence of an entity with characteristics, no characteristics can arise (MK 5.4)."
Objection: [60] A "defining-characteristic" does not have something characterized by it but is itself the object of the defining-characteristic (i.e., it is grounded in itself and not in a characterized object).
Reply: Even if that were so, the characterized object is different from the means of characterization by which that is defined. This is so since here the defining-characteristic is not defined by the characterized object. That is exactly the flaw. (That is, there is nothing here to function as the means of characterization to characterize an object.)
Objection: There is no such flaw in causing knowledge, and knowledge is included in its self-characteristic.

Reply: Here a self-characteristic is that nature of an entity. Its nature is not common to any other entity. Thus, for example, there is the solidity of the earth, the experience of an object of feeling, and the individual awareness of an object of cognition — i.e, this particular entity is characterized by that particular defining-characteristic. Thus, having cast aside the generally accepted derivation of "defining-characteristic," it is taken to have an objective support. But then, in apprehending that cognition is an objective support, one specific defining-characteristic itself has the condition of an object and another defining-characteristic has the nature of an objective support. [61] Here the flaw lies precisely in claiming that if the definingcharacteristic of any cognition is an objective support then there must be an object of action for it that is separate from it.
Objection: Defining-characteristics such as the solidity present in earth that are accessible to cognition are in fact the objects of cognition, and they are not separated from their particular self-characteristics.
Reply: If so, the defining self-characteristic of cognition does not have the condition of the object of a valid cognition, since it does not have the condition of "being an object." This is so because the self-characteristic, having precisely the nature of an object of action,has the condition of a valid object of knowledge. Thus, you specify that the object of a valid cognition is twofold — namely, having both a particular self-characteristic and a general characteristic. Thus, the following must be stated: one thing — the selfcharacteristic that is the valid object of cognition — is designated as what has been given a defining-characteristic, and another thing that is not the object of a valid cognition is designated as having been characterized definitionally by the former thing. And if this valid object of cognition also has an objective support, there still must be a different means. Butif another knowledge is settled on as the nature of the means, there is the flaw of an infinite regress of such means.
Objection: There is unmediated self-knowledge. Thus, since there is the condition of an object of action, due to its being an apprehension through self-knowledge, this is included in the valid objects of cognition.
Reply: Self-cognition is refuted in detail in our *Entry into the Middle Way* (MA 6.72-76). [62] Thus, one particular defining self-characteristic is here characterized by another particular defining self-characteristic, and doing this is unfounded (since the first defining-characteristic by itself supposedly defines an object). In addition, this alleged knowledge does not exist at all: there can be no knowledge of it because this knowledge is not established separately from the defining-characteristic, and because when there exists nothing that is characterized, then the defining-characteristic lacks an objective ground and so does not become operative. So how could there be any self-knowledge? (Also the valid objects of cognition and the valid means to cognition would collapse into one and thus neither would be established. See VV 30-51.) In the *Ratnachudaparipriccha Sutra*, it is said: "One may think this: 'Since there is an objective cognitive support, a thought arises.' Now are the object and the thought distinct? If so, there is a duality of thought. But if they are not distinct, how then does thought perceive this thought? Indeed, thought does not perceive thought. [63] The blade of a sword cannot cut itself, nor can the tip of a finger touch itself. So too, one thought cannot perceive that same thought. Thus, for one who has correctly applied himself there is no fixity of thought, neither ceasing nor nonceasing, nor unchanging, neither without a cause nor without conditions, neither arising from itself nor from another, neither identical nor distinct. One who knows and sees the stream of thought to be like a creeping vine knows and sees the nature of thought, the nonfixity of thought, the motionlessness of thought (i.e., it is nothing real that could move), the imperceptibility of thought (i.e., there is nothing real to see), and the self-characterization of thought. One who knows and sees in such a way does not come into conflict with the thus-ness of reality. And thus one knows accurately and

sees the isolatedness (from any defilements resulting from ideas of real entities) of thought. Such mental seeing of thought is the bodhisattva's application of mindfulness to thought."
Thus, there is no (real entity called) "self-knowledge." Since it does not exist, what is characterized definitionally by it?

Defining-Characteristics in General

In addition, there is no defining-characteristic either distinct from what is characterized nor not distinct from it. If it were distinct, then since the defining-characteristic is distinct from what is characterized, it would not be a defining-characteristic, like everything else that is not a defining-characteristic. And by being different from the defining-characteristic, what is characterized would not be characterized, like everything else that is not characterized (by that defining-characteristic). [64] Thus, because the defining-characteristic is distinct from what is characterized, there would exist for the defining-characteristic a characterized object independent of its defining-characteristic. Thus, because of this independence from any defining-characteristic, this object is like a (nonexistent) flower in the sky.

But if, on the other hand, what is characterized and its definingcharacteristic are not distinct, then because of this the condition of what is characterized as an "object that is characterized" is lost. And in the same way, the nature of the defining-characteristic is lost. By not being distinct from what is characterized, a defining-characteristic also does not have the nature of a "defining-characteristic," just as with the nature of an "object that is characterized." In the *Lokatitastava Sutra*, it is declared: "If the definingcharacteristic is distinct from the thing characterized, this thing would exist without a defining-characteristic. And neither exists in the case where they are not distinct. The Buddha has explained this very plainly."

Apart from identity and distinction, there is no other way of existing (for what is self-existent). Thus, it is declared: "Indeed, how could there be the establishment of two things, when this establishment does not occur through either identity or difference?"

Objection : There is an establishment through its inexpressibility. *Reply*: This is not so. There is "inexpressibility" only in the absence of any precise knowledge of mutual otherness. (Where there are no self-existent entities, entities are not distinct or clearly "other"; thus, the relation of things that are dependently-arisen is inexpressible.) But where there is no precise knowledge of mutual otherness, there is lacking a specification of distinction "this is the defining-characteristic, and this is the thing characterized" — and where this is lacking, these two indeed do not exist. Thus, there is no establishment of a defining-characteristic through inexpressibility.
In addition, if knowledge is a means, who is the agentin discerning an object? [65] For without an agent, there is no means and so forth, just as in the case of cutting where there is someone cuttingand a cutting implement. And it is also unfounded that the mind is deemed the agent here: the operation of the mind consists in seeing nothing but an intentional object, and it is the mental factors that see the particularity of the intentional object.
Where there is a single principal activity to be achieved, there is an instrumentality and so forth of the means and so forth since they serve a subsidiary role through their subsidiary activity in this process. But here there is no single principal activity for both knowledge and an act of cognition. Instead,

distinguishing the particularity of nothing but the intentional object is the principal activity of cognition, while distinguishing the particularity of the intentional object is the principal activity of knowledge. (That is, cognition selects an object and knowledge gives it its "thingness.") Thus, for knowledge there is no instrumentality, and for cognition there is no agency. This is precisely the flaw with this position.

Objection: According to scriptural authority, all things are without a self. Thus, there is no agent whatsoever. But there is indeed found a conventional usage that relates to an act and so forth even without an agent.

Reply: This too is not so, for no real intentional object has been specified by the scriptural authority. This has been exactly stated in *Entering the Middle Way* (MA 6.76).

Objection: [66] In the case of expressions like "the body of a statue" or "the head of (the bodyless demon) Rahu," there is the relation of "distinguishing mark" and "what is distinguished," even though there is no mark distinct from the body and head. So too with the expression "the definingcharacteristic of the earth" there is also such a relation, even though there is no earth distinct from its specific defining-characteristic.

Reply: This is not so because of the incompatibility between the case of the defining-characteristic and your examples. In the case of the words "body" and "head," there is dependency on another accompanying thing, such as a thought (for the case of the "head"), a hand (for the case of the "body"), and so forth. Since that is the case, there is present the additional production of a thought having as its object the words "body" and "head" and involving precisely the expectation of the other accompanyingthing, such as "the body of what?" or "the head of whom?" and so forth. Since one wishes to eliminate any connection with a further distinguishing mark, it is appropriate that still another mark would remove an apprehender's expectation through the expressions for the marks "statue" and "Rahu," since these expressions conform to mundane conventions. But in the case of a defining-characteristic and what is characterized, no such relation of "distinguishing mark" and "what is distinguished" is found. (For example, there is no possibility of what is characterized existing apart from the characteristic, e.g., earth apart from solidity.)

Objection: The mention of a "mark" is not fallacious to outsiders, for they accept a characterized object that is distinct (from a defining-characteristic).

Reply: [67] The situation is not like that, for it is not reasonable to incorporate into one's own doctrine things that are theorized by speculative reasoners that lack a foundation in reason, since then an additional standard for valid knowledge must be accepted (leading to an infinite regress). In addition, there is a statue that, as the receiver of denotation, has the objective support of a body that is part of the mundane conventional usage of "statue" and has a mark that has been accepted without any analysis of the situation. So too, there is Rahu who as the receiver of denotation has the objective support of a head. This being so, the comparison to the situation of a defining-characteristic and what is characterized is unfounded, just as with the name of an "individual" and so forth.

Objection: The comparison is indeed established since it shares this much: in the examples of the statue and Rahu's head, there is no establishment of a separate torso or head.

Reply: This is not so, since in mundane conventional usage, there is no such analytical investigation, and mundane things exist without analysis being engaged in. When analyzed, there is no "self" that is found to exist separately from material form and the other four aggregates constituting a "person." Yet by the conventional truth of the world, the "self" exists in dependence upon those factors. So too, there is no establishment in the examples of the statue and Rahu. Thus, when critically analyzed, there is found nothing in such things as earth that is characterized definitionally apart from these things'

defining-characteristics such as "solidity." And even though apart from what is characterized a defining-characteristic lacks a ground, there is this conventional truth. Teachers have declared the conventional existence of things because of their establishment through simple interdependence and that this must be accepted in this manner — otherwise conventional truth would be without a justificationand it would then be reality as it truly is and not conventional. [68] Nor is there the nonexistence of such things as a statue that are in fact being analyzed with respect to whether there is a justification. Instead, because of the reasoning given below, there is no existence even of the material form, feelings, and other aggregates of a "person." Thus, as with the statue, their existence is to be accepted conventionally. But since it is not real, it is nonexistent (from the point of view of what is in fact real).

Objection: Even if that is so, what is the point of such subtle investigation? For indeed we do not claim that the whole of the conventional usage of "valid knowledge" and "the means of valid knowledge" is real. Rather, we are setting out in this argument what is acknowledged by the world.

Reply: We also ask, what indeed is the point of introducing this subtle investigation into the conventional usage of the world? First, there is the conventional truth of the existence of an entity that is acquired through the mere misapprehension of how things really are. For those seeking release from rebirth, this may be the motivating cause for the accumulation of the wholesome merit that is the carrier to release, while there is no knowledge of how things really are. [69] However, because your intellect is not refined in making the distinction between "worldly convention" and "ultimate meaning," you ruin it by bad reasoning against worldly convention, claiming that it does not correspond to true reasoning. As for myself, I take my stand precisely in worldly propositions through my skill in determining conventional truth, and by means of one reason I exclude this or that other reason that is advanced to deny some particular conventional truth, but I do not reject conventional truth.

Thus, if the claim is a mundane conventional usage, then what is characterized by a defining-characteristic must exist in the same way as the defining-characteristic. Because this is so, this is precisely the flaw in your argument. But if the claim is an ultimate truth, then there is also no pair of particular and general characteristics, since there is no thing to be characterized. So how could there be a pair of "means of valid knowledge"?

Objection: Then no derivation of words predicated on the relation between "an act" and "an actor" is accepted.

Reply: That would be very difficult. You yourself engage in conventional activity through precisely those words that function because of the relation of act and actor, yet you do not consider the meaning of words to be constructed out of this connection of an act and an implement and so forth. Unfortunately, your procedure thus depends on nothingbut wishes.

In addition, when the pair of valid objects of knowledge is unfixed in this way, then scriptural authority and so forth will also not fail to be additional valid means of knowledge since they do not fall within the reach of either a particular self-characteristic (i.e., the field of direct perception) or a general characteristic (i.e., the field of inference).

Moreover, this is without foundation since there is nothing that extends to all circumstances of the defining-characteristic (i.e., the opponent's definition is too narrow and misses some mundane instances covered by the term). This is so because there has been accepted the mundane conventional usage as with, for example, "The pot is directly perceivable," and also because there has been accepted a conventional usage not belonging to the noble ones.

Objection: [70] The dark color and so forth that are the objective support of the pot are directly

perceptible, and so there is a determination of the supports by direct perception as a valid means of knowledge. Thus, just as the Buddha's birth is designated "bliss" through a figurative reference to the cause for its effect, so too a pot having as its material cause dark color and so forth is described as directly perceptible through the figurative reference of its cause to the effect.

Reply: Such figurative usage is unfounded with respect to an object of this kind. For in the world, birth is apprehended as different from bliss, and birth is not in fact bliss because it is the cause of hundreds of hardships since it has as its nature a compound defining-characteristic. Thus, describing birth as "bliss" is indeed inappropriate, and thus the figurative usage is appropriate for such an object. But in the case of "The pot is directly perceptible," nothing that is not directly perceptible as a pot is separately perceived that could become directly perceptible based on the figurative usage.

Objection: Because of the nonexistence of any pot existing separately from its dark color and so forth, its direct perceptibility comes from the figure used.

Reply: Even if this is so, the figurative usage is all the more unfounded because there is no base (such as dark color) that is open to the usage. For sharpness is not open to such usage for a nonexistent donkey's horn.

In addition, a pot is a part of mundane conventional usage because it does not exist separately from dark color and so forth. This being so, if a pot has its direct perceptibility theorized through a figurative usage because the dark color does not exist separately from earth, thenthe direct perceptibility of the dark earth through such usage must also be theorized. [71] As has been stated by Aryadeva: "Just as the pot is not seen apart from form, smell, taste, and touch (i.e., the pot does not exist apart from these), so form and the others are not seen apart the elements of earth, water, fire, and air (CS 14.15)."

Thus, because the mundane conventional usage of this nature is not accepted in your definition of the defining-characteristic, your definition of the defining-characteristic does not extend to all circumstances. Nor indeed is the direct perceptibility of such things as the pot and of such things as the dark color accepted by one who knows reality as it truly is. However, the direct perceptibility of such things as the pot is precisely to be accepted on the level of the conventional truth of the worldly people. As has been declared by Aryadeva: "Not everything about a pot is perceived by perceiving its form. Indeed, what person who knows reality as it truly is would also say that the pot is perceptible in all respects? With the very same reasoning, those with supreme intelligence should refute all that is subject to smell, taste, and touch (CS 13.1-2)."

Objection: [72] In addition, an object that is immediately present is directly perceptible, for the words "directly perceptible" denote an object not closed off to perception. Since it is understood that the sense-faculty of vision bears directly on this dark color, the direct perceptibility of the pot and the dark color and so forth that are not closed off to perception is established. And since the knowledge determining this is caused by what is directly perceptible, its direct perceptibility is indicated, as with a fire whose objective support is grass or straw.

Reply: But for one who, like Dignaga, explains the words "directly perceptible" to mean "being present to each sense-faculty separately." However, this derivation is unfounded because knowledge is not the object of any sense-faculty. Rather, it has a sense-object for its object. Thus, let "sense-perception" be "thing-perception" or "object-perception."

Objection: We employ the designation "eye-cognition" because of the sense-organ alone, for a cognition is changeable from changes in that senseorgan owing to the sharpness or feebleness of the sense-organ, even though cognition is dependent upon both the sense-organ and the mental visual faculty. So too, although there is an act of cognition with respect to each intentional object separately,

a cognition that acts separately on each sensefaculty still gets its name from its sense-organ. Thus, there is the designation “sense-perception” and not “thing-perception” or “object-perception,” for a designation is seen because of its specific base, as with “a drum sound” or “a barley sprout.”
Reply: These examples do not apply to the previous topic since cognition is designated according to its sense-object. But the differences between the six cognitions (i.e., cognitions from the five senses and the mind) are not indicated by expressions such as “cognition of form”since a mental cognition involves a single object along with visual cognition and so forth (i.e., mental cognitions involve the same object as a sense-cognition). [73] In this way, since the six cognitions, such as of dark color, are named “cognition,” there indeed occurs the idea having precisely this expectation: “Does a particular cognition arise from one of the five empirical sense-faculties or from the mind?” But since the designation of a cognition is with respect to its senseorgan, a difference is established between them even when a mental cognition occurs in relation to the sense-object of visual cognition.
But in the present case, because of your desire to state the definingcharacteristic of the valid means of knowledge, you accept that only what is free of conceptualizations has the condition of being open to direct perception. This being so, no purpose whatsoever is seen for the designation of a valid means of knowledge by its specific cause, for you suppose that this differs precisely from what is open to conceptualization. And the number of valid means of knowledge depends on the valid objects of knowledge, and the existence of their nature is acquired through each means simply reproducing the feature of their valid objects of knowledge. Thus, the nature of the two means (direct perception and inference) is fixed. Thus, a designation by reference to a sense-faculty is of no help whatsoever. Thus, the designation of a valid means of knowledge by means of only its object is in every respect proper.
Objection: Because the expression “object-perception” in the sense you intend is not used by the people of the world — the word “sense-perception” is used — we rely on the meaning based on “sense-organ.”
Reply: [74] The word “sense-perception” is current among the people of the world. Indeed, we have expressed this just as it is used in the world. But when an explanation is advanced that sets aside the ordinary mundane meaning as fixed by usage, the current word will also then be cast aside. Thus, the word “sense-perception” would not exist. A single visual cognition based momentarily on the sense-faculty for its sense-organ then does not posses the condition of being directly perceptible, for it lacks a widelydistributed object. And if the condition of being directly perceptible does not exist in one instance, it cannot exist in many either.
You accept that the condition of being directly perceptible belongs only to knowledge from which conceptualization has been removed. Also, because of that, according to you there is no mundane conventional usage (for there are no conceptualizations in what is directly perceptible). But since it is still your desire to explain the conventional usages of “the valid means of knowledge” and “the valid objects of knowledge,” the result of your conceptualizations of the valid means of “direct perception” is indeed senseless.
Your position is also without a foundation since according to scriptural authority there is no direct perceptibility by a cognition that is indeed free of conceptualization. There is no relevance here of the scriptural authority that has the sense of expressing the defining-characteristic of direct perception: “One who is having a visual-perception of a dark color does not know ‘It is a dark color.’” [75] The scripture is only making known that the five cognitions belonging to the five sense-faculties are themselves without senses. Thus, for the people of the world, if you claim “What is subject to defining-characterization exists” or “Both a ‘defining self-characteristic’ and a ‘general characteristic’ exist,” all in fact will be open to perception for there is then immediate perception.

And the sense-perception is thereby defined along with the cognition having it as its object. Such things as the double moon that is seen by someone with an eye-defect do not have the condition of being directly perceptible by the cognition of people unaffected with an eyedefect. But according to your position, two moons will indeed be directly perceptible to those who are affected with an eye-defect and so forth.
Besides direct perception, there are three other valid means of knowledge. An "inference" constitutes knowledge that is not open to perception but that arises from a distinguishing characteristic that follows inevitably from what is to be inferred. "Scriptural authority" is a statement made by reliable persons who know matters that transcend the senses. And "comparison" is understanding through resemblance of something that has not been actually experienced, such as in "A wild ox is like a domestic ox."
In this manner, the understanding of things by the worldly is defined by the fourfold valid means of knowledge. Such "valid means of knowledge" are established in a mutual dependence with the "valid objects of knowledge": there are valid objects of knowledge when there the valid means of knowledge, and there are valid means of knowledge when there the valid objects of knowledge. But it is most assuredly not the case that either the means or objects are established as self-existent. Thus, letonly worldly matters that conform with what is known by experience be accepted.
But enough of these reductio ad absurdum arguments!We will now explain the main topic: the blessed buddhas teaching of the doctrine based on the way people of the world see things (i.e., byconventional truths).

The Conditions for Arising

Hinayana Buddhist objection : [76] We agree with you that entities do not arise from themselves since the arising of an entity that already exists out of itself serves no purpose. That entities do not arise out of both themselves and others is also acceptable since each half of the combination has been invalidated. And the final option that entities arise without a cause is wholly absurd and should be dismissed.

But you also maintain that entities do not arise from what is other than themselves, and this we do not admit. The Buddha taughtthat entities have causes that are other than themselves. As Nagarjuna states:

[2] There are four conditions: the effective cause, objective support within the world, continuity with previous states, and overall influence. There is no fifth condition.

[77] Here the "effective cause" is what brings about a result. What brings about something else — e.g., a seed producing a sprout — is called by definition the "effective cause." When something is intentionally produced, it arises from a support in the world, and that is its "objective support." The destruction of the immediately preceding cause is a condition for the production of the effect — e.g., the destruction of the seed for the sprout to arise. This is the condition of "continuity with previous states." The "overall influence" is that condition because of which something else will come to be. These are the four conditions of arising. If there are other conditions that are prior to, simultaneous with, or subsequent to arising, they are included in these. A creator god and other such conditions do not exist. Hence the limit "There is no fifth condition."

Entities arise under these conditions, and these conditions are not identical to what is produced. Thus, there is "production from another."
Reply: Neither do entities arise from what is other than themselves [78]:

[3] The self-existence of entities is not found in their conditions; and if there is no self-existence, no other-existence (i.e., the self-existence of something else [MK 15.3]) can be found either.

If the entities that arise as effects were self-existent and were in any way in their causes and conditions — either in them collectively, or separately, or both in them collectively and in each one individually, or outside of their causes and conditions collectively — and if they are other than their conditions, the effect would arise from them (while still in them). But this is not so: the effects do not exist prior to their arising. If they did already exist in the collection of causes and conditions in any way, they would be perceived there, and their arising from causes and conditions serves no purpose.

Thus, the conditions for arising do not contain any self-existent entities. But if there is no self-existence, there is no other-existence (since otherexistence is simply the self-existence of something else). An entity comes into existence when it arises. To arise from "what is other" means to exist in dependence on the "other." But no real entity is so (i.e., what is real is not dependent on anything in any way). Thus, it cannot be maintained that entities arise from what is other than themselves.

Objection : Produced entities, such as sprouts, do not exist in their causes, such as seeds, until the causes have undergone changes. It is the nature of causes to change themselves. Otherwise, there would be no causes at all (if there is no real change).

Reply : But then in what sense can we understand the "otherness" of causes and conditions? When both a worker and his co-worker are present, they are two separate entities and their mutual relation is one of "otherness." But no such co-existence is found between a seed and a sprout. Thus, when sprouts and so forth are not separate and self-existent, seeds and so forth cannot exist as separate and self-existent, and thus there is no (real) "otherness." The designation of "otherness" cannot apply, and there is no arising from an "other." (That is, there is no real, self-existent cause or effect, and only if the cause were real could the effect be real or the relation of "otherness" be real.) The opponent reveals his utter ignorance of the true meaning of the scriptures. The buddhas never uttered anything contrary to this. The true intention of the scriptures was explained above.

Causal Energy

[79] Thus, the proponents of cognitions "arising from conditions" are disposed of. Next are the proponents of arising through "causal energy." They argue that the eye, color, and the other conditions do not cause a visual cognition directly. These are called "conditions" because they give rise to the causal energy that actually gives rise to a cognition. Thus, the conditions as distinct entities do no produce cognition. The causal energy giving rise to the cognition exists already in the conditions, like the causal action that cooks rice. We respond:

[4a] Causal energy is not in the conditions.

If there were any such a causal energy, it would give rise to a visual cognition by means of the eye and other conditions, since it is already in the conditions, but this is not so. We ask: does this supposed causal energy appear after the cognition already exists, or before, or simultaneously with it? If the cognition has already arisen, the supposed causal energy has no purpose — the causal energy is suppose to produce something, but if that thing is already produced, what need is there of the causal energy? This has been made clear in *Entering the Middle Way*: "It is inadmissible to suggest that something that is already arisen could be arise all over again (MA 6.8)."

Neither should we suppose that the causal energy exists before the cognition is produced. This we have also stated in *Entering the Middle Way*: "Production in the absence of a producer makes no sense (MA 6.19)."

[80] Nor is the existence of the causal energy at the moment of production possible since the effect is either produced or not produced — there is no production between these two. It has been said: "What is being produced is not produced because it is only half produced. Otherwise, all things without exception are always in a state of being produced."

Thus, since a causal energy is not found in the past, present, or future, it does not exist. That is why Nagarjuna says: "Causal energy is not in the conditions." In *Entering the Middle Way*, we commented on this point: "There can be no characteristics made without something that is characterized (MA 6.57)." Indeed, the son of a barren woman cannot be characterized as having a cow.

But then may a causal energy exist without already being in the conditions? Nagarjuna responds:
[4b] . . . nor is the causal energy outside of the conditions.

If the causal energy is independent of the conditions, how could it exist outside of the conditions, for then it would be noncausal? How could one suppose that if the cloth does not exist in the threads that it could exist in straw?

Objection : If it is impossible to suppose that there is a causal energy, then the conditions themselves must produce things.
Reply: This is answered:

[4c] Moreover, no conditions exist without the power to act.
If there is no causal energy, then the conditions lack the power to act, cannot act, and thus are not causes. How then do they produce anything?

Objection : But since they do give rise to things, they do possess causal energy.
Reply: To this, it is answered [81]:

[4d] . . ., nor do the conditions exist with the power to act.

The meaning is that a causal energy does not exist. How can there be a causal energy in the conditions. What was stated above concerning a causal energy producing a visual cognition applies to other types of causes. Thus the very term "producing" is itself without meaning.

Conditions

Objection : What is the point of your examination of conditions having causal energy? Things such as visual cognitions still arise in dependence on other things such as the eye as their conditions. Thus, the eye and so forth are "conditions" since such things as visual cognitions arise from them. *Reply*: This is also wrong. Nagarjuna states:

[5] Conditions are called "conditions" because something arises dependent upon something else. But as long as that "something" does not arise, why are the conditions not really non-conditions?

If visual cognitions arise dependent on the eye, color, and so forth as conditions, then these are said to be their "conditions." But as long as the visual cognition, i.e., the effect, has not arisen, aren'tthe eye, color, and so forth "non-conditions"? This is the meaning of calling them "non-conditions." And nothing arises out of non-conditions — e.g., sesame oil does not arise out of grains of sand.

Objection : [82] What at one time are non-conditions become causes by combining with some other conditions.
Reply: This is not so. The condition that supposedly becomes a cause when combined with things that are not yet "conditions" can be a "cause" only when those things are in fact conditions. In that case, precisely the same difficulty arises as before. Thus, this explanation cannot be accepted. In our example, the eye, color, and so forth are accepted as the conditions of a visual cognition, but are they the conditions of an existing cognition or of a nonexisting cognition? Nagarjuna states that either way is impossible:

[6] A condition is not admitted for either what is not real or for what is real: if something is nonexistent, how could it have a condition? And if something is already existing, how could it have a condition?

If there is no entity, how can there be a condition of what in fact does not exist? Nor can it be some future entity, i.e., something that will be. You may attempt to explain that a future cognition will arise from a potentiality, but this not occur because there is no "potentiality" (MA 6.58). This flaw has been dealt with above. And if in fact something already exists — i.e., has already arisen — then the notion of its "condition" is simply useless.

[83] Having shown in this way that conditions in general are not "causes" since they lack the capacity to produce effects, Nagarjuna now proceeds to consider the conditions one by one and to show that they are not causes.

Objection : Even if there are no conditions in this way, nevertheless because the definition of its defining-characteristics can be given the idea of a "condition" is well-established. The definition of the "effective cause" condition that is accepted here is that it is what "brings about" something. But a definition could never be given to something that is entirely the absence of an entity, like the son of barren woman (and so does not exist).

Reply: There would be a cause if it had a defining-characteristic, but:

[7] So too, when no existing, nonexisting, or existing-and-nonexisting basic phenomena of the experienced world are produced, how is a cause admitted?

Here "are produced" means to "created." If the basic phenomenon that is produced were in fact created, the cause would produce it. But it is not created — nothing existing, nonexisting, or both existing and nonexisting is ever created. Nothing existing can be created since it always has existed. Nothing nonexisting can be created since it does not exist. Nothing both existing and nonexisting can be created since no one thing can have the mutually contradicting characteristics of "existing" and "not existing" and because, even if they did, of the flaws of each position already given. Thus, the claim that there must be a cause because of its definition must be given up as inadmissible.

Nagarjuna now proceeds to refute the second condition — "objective support within the world" [84]:

[8] Something real is shown to be unsupported by another real thing. When a thing exists without such objective support, what purpose would an objective support serve?

What are the basic phenomena that Hinayanists hold to be dependent on an objective support? According to scripture, all the contents of the mind are so dependent. Whatever objective cause — e.g., color or another sense-object — produces the contents of the minds is their objective support.

Is this objective support imagined for mental content that already exists or for mental content that has not yet arisen? In the first case, there is no need for an objective support for mental content that already exists — indeed, the objective support is supposed to explain the arising of mental content, but the content in fact exists prior to the objective support operating. Indeed, the mind and its content would be established as existing without any objective support. Thus, the mind and its content appear as real (i.e., self-existent and so without causes). Then it would simply be your imagination that there is an objective support, for there is no connection whatsoever between the mental content and any objective support.

On the other hand, it is not possible to imagine that mental content that does not yet exist has an objective support. Existing mental content would not need an objective support, as Nagarjuna states. [85] But there can be no connection of nonexistent mental content with an objective support. Our opponent would have to substitute "with such objective support" for "without such objective support" in the verse, but it reads "When a thing exists without such objective support, what purpose would an objective support serve?" That is why it is expressed in the form of a question. The meaning then is: if some mental content is thus without an objective support, it is in fact nonexistent, and so how can it then have an objective support? If what would need objective support does not exist, neither can the objective support exist.

Objection : But then do the contents of the mind have objective support? *Reply*: There is an objective support if the question is considered from the conventional point of view, but not from the point of view of what is real. Thus, there is no error.

Nagarjuna next proceeds to refute the idea of a condition of "continuity with previous states" [86]:

[9] When basic phenomena have not arisen first, cessation does not occur. Thus, the condition of

"continuity" is not applicable. And how can it indeed be a "condition" when the reality has ceased?

Here the two halves of the last sentence should be transposed and the word "indeed" should precede "has ceased." Thus, the second half of the verse should be: "When the reality indeed has ceased, how can it be a 'condition'? Thus, the condition of 'continuity' is not applicable." It was put the other way only for the purpose of structuring the verse.

The Hinayana definition of "continuity with previous states" is this: the immediately preceding destruction of the cause is a condition for the arising of the effect. This must be examined. If the basic phenomena of the experienced world are effects — e.g., a sprout — that do not in fact arise, then it is not possible that their cause — e.g., the seed — has ceased to exist. In this case, there is no cessation of the cause, and so how could there be a continuity with a previous state? Or, suppose it is maintained that the seed ceases to exist before the effect arises. If that is so, when the seed has ceased to exist, it is nonexistent, and so what will then be the cause of the sprout? And what will be the cause of the destruction of the seed? Both the cessation of the seed and the arising of the sprout are without causes. As Nagarjuna states: "how can it indeed be a 'condition' when the reality has ceased?" The word "indeed" refers back to the previous phrase "cessation does not occur." Since it is supposed that the sprout does not arise because the seed and other conditions have ceased, then both the cessation of the seed and the arising of the sprout are without a cause. Thus, a "continuity with previous states" is not possible.

Alternatively, there is another explanation of the verse based on the first verse: "No entities whatsoever are found anywhere that have arisen from themselves, from another, from both themselves and another, or from no cause at all (MK 1.1)." This is a general rejection of the whole idea of "causation." Then the first three lines of verse 9 refers to this general rejection, and the last line is to be explained exactly as before.

Nagarjuna now goes on to refute the idea of the condition of "overall influence":
[10] Since the existence of entities without self-existence is not found, we cannot say "This reality existing, that one comes to be."

[87] The Hinayana definition of "overall influence" is this: something arises when the condition called an "overall influence" is present. But since entities arise in dependence on other entities and no entities are self-existent, how indeed can the phrase "this reality" point to a (real) cause? And how can the phrase "that one" point to a (real) effect? Thus, although "overall influence" is defined, it has not been established.

Effects and Conditions

Objection : Having seen that, for example, cloth is made out of threads, it is said that threads are the condition of the cloth.
Reply: It is from the point of view of what is actually real that production of such things as cloth is denied. How then can the causal effectiveness of the conditions be established (when nothing real is involved)? Nagarjuna makes clear that the production of such effects as cloth is ultimately unreal:

[11] An effect does not exist in conditions that are either separate or combined. And how can what does not exist in the conditions come from those conditions?

The cloth does not exist in the threads, nor in any of the other conditions — the weaver's brush, his loom, the shuttle, the pins, or any other condition taken individually — because we do not perceive the cloth in any of them. In addition, from a plurality of causes, there would be a plurality of effects. And since the cloth does not exist in the conditions taken individually, it does not exist in the conditions taken collectively. And since the effect is not present in any single part, the effect would have to arise part by part. Thus, since there is no self-existent effect, there can be no self-existent conditions.

[12ab] If the effect that develops from conditions does not exist in those conditions, . . .
[88] This is what the Hinayana holds. Nagarjuna replies:
[12cd] . . . why does it not arise without those conditions?

The effect does not pre-exist in what are non-conditions either. Thus, cloth cannot arise from such non-conditions as straw. Since they do not have their own existence, no real effect ever arises at all.

Objection : If the effect were one thing and its conditions were something totally separate, then the question whether the effect exists in the conditions would be understandable, but an effect is not totally separate from its conditions. On the contrary, the effect simply *is* the conditions.

Reply: Nagarjuna states:

[13] The effect is not constituted by its conditions. Conditions are not self-created. So how can an effect that arises from conditions that are themselves not self-created be created by those conditions?

It is wrong to maintain that an effect possesses the conditions and that the effect is a modification of its conditions since the conditions are not real conditions because they are not self-existent. You assert that the piece of cloth consists only of threads. [89] The cloth could then be real if it is established that the threads are self-existent. But the cloth consists of parts and is the modification of these parts, and thus the cloth is not self-existent. Thus, the effect named "cloth" arises from parts that have no self-nature and are not self-existent — how then can it be maintained that the cloth consists of threads (since these parts are not real)? It has been said: "Cloth results from its threads, and the threads result from something else — but how can what is not itself self-existent (i.e., real) be the cause of something else?"

[14a] Thus, an effect is not made either by conditions . . .
Thus, there is no effect in the conditions. If it is supposed on the contrary that it is in non-conditions, then:
[14b] . . . nor by non-conditions.
If a cloth does not consist of threads, how can there be one consisting of straw?

Objection : Even supposing there is no real effect, there is however regularity among things as to conditions and non-conditions. You yourself say: "If there is no real effect, why is it that certain

effects arise only after conditions they are associated with and not after conditions they are not associated with?" If there are no effects, whether a cloth or straw mat, the condition-ness of their conditions, whether the threads or straw, would not be possible (i.e., they would not be called "conditions"). Thus, we Hinayanists maintain that the effect is real.

Reply : There would be a (real) effect, if there were (real) conditions and non-conditions. If the effect were real, we could say such and such are its conditions and such and such are not its conditions. But through analysis, these things are found not to be real.

[14cd] But in the absence of a (real) effect, where are conditions or non-conditions found?

[90] Thus, there is no (real) association among separate things, since none have their own existence. As is said in the *Ratnakara Sutra*: "The adept of emptiness is not found, like the bird's path in the sky. What in no way is selfexistent can never be a cause of something else. How can what lacks selfexistence, without itself existing, be the cause of anything else? Such is the nature of a 'cause' as taught by the Buddha. All the basic phenomena of the experienced world are like mountains: by their nature immovable, firmly planted, unchanging, never suffering, peaceful; they are imperceivable, like the path of a flight in the sky, and misperceived by the unenlightened. As mountains can never be shaken, so basic phenomena are immovable. They never arise nor cease. In this manner, the victorious Buddha taught the true nature of the basic phenomena of the experienced world." [91] And from another source: "The true doctrine of the basic phenomena has been revealed by the victorious Buddha, a lion among men. It is not born or arisen. It does not decay or die. In it all sentient beings are established. If what is empty of self-existence in every sense, how can it then receive self-existence from another (i.e., "other-existence")? Thus, there is nothing real either internally or externally, but the doctrine of the Buddha is realized everywhere. The condition of being at peace has been revealed by the Buddha. In it there is no substance at all. There you will stroll, free from rebirth. Being free from rebirth yourself, there you will dwell and will free hosts of sentient beings. There is no other path whatsoever to be discerned.

Chapter 15: Self-Nature and Self-Existence

Objection : [259] Entities in fact have a self-nature, and these natures arise as products of certain causes and conditions. We do not take entities that do not exist, such as flowers in the sky, to be the effects of causes and conditions. But we take, for example, a seed to be a cause that has a sprout as its effect, or root-ignorance to be the cause that has emotional dispositions as its effect. Thus, we claim that entities have own natures.

Refuting Self-Nature

Reply : If entities such as dispositions and sprouts have their own natures, what is the purpose of their arising, since they already exist? Since there indeed are dispositions (conventionally), we would not have to suppose that root-ignorance as their cause for a second arising, nor seeds for a second arising of sprouts. Thus, nothing other than itself is required for the arising of anything since its self-nature already exists. But as Nagarjuna says:

[1ab] That self-nature arises from causes and conditions is not admissible.

You may agree that before something arises there can be no self-nature of anything and that when something already exists its arising again would be pointless. But you may ask: what if a self-nature, which does not exist before something arises, subsequently arises from causes and conditions. If you think thus, Nagarjuna continues:

[1cd] If self-nature arose from causes and conditions, it would be something produced.

Objection : [260] That self-natures are produced — since they arise from causes and conditions — is exactly what we mean. Thus, the objection that self-natures are produced does not harm us.

Reply: Nagarjuna says that this claim too is not admissible:
[2ab] But how could there be a "produced self-nature"?

Since the terms "produced" and "self-nature" are mutually incompatible, the phrase "produced self-nature" has an inconsistent sense. Here the etymology is that "self-nature" is something's own nature (and so cannot be produced by something else). Thus, in conventional usage, something that is "produced" — e.g., the heat of hot water that is produced by fuel or the acts of a spirit or a ruby-like quartz (to focus sunlight) — is not commonly spoken of as "self-nature." But it is conventionally said that what is produced has a self-nature — e.g., the heat of a fire or the genuine ruby-ness of rubies. That is called "self-nature" because it is not produced by a conjunction with something else.

Thus, the mundane convention is what is non-produced has a "selfnature." But we claim further that it should be recognized that heat also is not the self-nature of fire because of its nature too is produced. In the case here, one sees that fire arises from the confluence of a focusing gem, fuel, and the sun or from the friction of two sticks rubbed together, and so forth — thus, it is purely dependent on causes and conditions. But heat does not occur apart from fire. Thus, heat too arises from causes and conditions and thus is produced. And because it is produced, like the heat of hot water, it is clearly ascertained that heat is not fire's (self-existent) "self-nature."

Objection : But that heat is the self-nature of fire is well-known even to ordinary people, including cowherds and women.
Reply: Did we say that it is not well-known? Rather, we claim that is not entitled to be called "self-nature" since it does not that have the characteristics of "self-nature" (and thus is not real). [261] However, by relying on the errors based on root-ignorance, the unenlightened world accepts all things that have arisen as endowed with a (self-existent) self-nature although they are in fact without it. For example, one with cataracts, because of the condition of having cataracts, is fixed on the self-nature of illusory hair, even though it is in fact (nonexistent because it is) without self-existence. So too, because the eye of cognition is afflicted by the eye-disease of root-ignorance, the naive are fixed on what has arisen as endowed with a (self-existent) selfnature, although it is in fact (nonexistent because it is) without self-existence. The naive declare the defining-characteristics of things according to this fixation — e.g., claiming that heat is the defining self-characteristic of fire. They claim that heat is its very own defining-characteristic, since it is unique and not perceived anywhere else except in fire.
And, according to what is familiar to all who are unenlightened, the Buddha presented this self-nature

as conventionally real in the Abhidharma schools. A generic property such as impermanence is called a "general defining-characteristic." However, when it comes to the understanding of those whose eye of wisdom is clear, since it is free of the eye-disease of rootignorance, then it is clearly stated by the noble ones, who do not apprehend the self-nature imagined by the naive, just as those without cataracts do not see the illusory hair seen by those with cataracts, that this self-nature is not the real nature of entities. [262] As it is said inthe *Lankavatara Sutra*: "As those with an eye-disease mistakenly grasp after false hairs, so the naive mistakenly imagine the idea that entities are real.There is no self-existence, no knowledge, no reality, and no ground to consciousness — these are all the imaginings of unenlightened, idle speculative reasoners." And: "Knowing that self-existence does not arise within time, I have declared that all the basic phenomena of the experienced world do not arise withintime."

What is Self-Nature?

Objection : You indeed say that such things as the heat of fire are without a (self-existent) self-nature, since they arise from causes and conditions and thus are produced. In that case, what is the defining-characteristic of the selfnature of, for example, fire? And what is that "self-nature"? You should make that clear.

Reply: The reply is from Nagarjuna:
[2cd] Self-nature is non-produced and not dependent upon anything else.

Here the intended meaning is that a self-nature exists only in itself (i.e., it is self-existent). [263] What is something's innermost form is called its "selfnature." What is uniquely something's own? Whatever in it that is not produced. But what is produced, such as the heat of water, is not its own. In addition, what is under something's control is its own, such as one's servants or wealth. But what is under another's control is not one's own, such as something borrowed for a time, and is not subject to itself.

Thus, what is produced and what is dependent on another thing are not considered to have a self-nature. For this reason, it is not correct to say that heat is fire's self-nature — both because it is dependent on causes and conditions and because it is produced, since it arises after having previously been nonexistent. And this being so, it follows that (if there are real selfnatures) the unborn nature of fire, which is invariable throughout time, is unproduced — i.e., it cannot arise after previously having been nonexistent. [264] It is also not dependent on causes and conditions — unlike hot water, or "this side" and "other side," or "long" and "short." That is what is meant by a self-nature.

Objection : Is there then a "self-nature" of this nature (i.e, unborn and nondependent) in things such as fire?
Reply: This self-nature of anything, such as fire, neither exists nor does it not exist by its own nature. Although this is so, in order to avoid frightening listeners, we nevertheless superimpose conventional reality (onto what is actually real) and affirm that it exists. As theBuddha said: "Of the teaching without syllables, what can be heard and what taught? Only by superimposition can what is without syllables be heard and alsotaught." Here also Nagarjuna says: "'Empty,' 'not empty,' 'both,' or 'neither' — these should not be said, but they are said only for the purpose of indication (MK 22.11)."

Objection: If to allay fear, you indeed say through attribution that selfnature exists, what then does "self-nature" itself mean?
Reply: What is called "the true nature" of the basic phenomena of the experienced world is their self-nature.
Objection: What then is "the true nature of the basic phenomena of the experienced world"?
Reply: The self-nature of the basic phenomena of the experienced world.
Objection: What is "self-nature"?
Reply: Original nature.
Objection: What is this "original nature"?
Reply: What emptiness is.
Objection: What is this "emptiness"?
Reply: Lack of self-existence.
Objection: What is this lack of self-existence?
Reply: [265] The "thus-ness" of things.
Objection: What is this "thus-ness"?
Reply: Being thus — changeless and never-arisen. Whatever it is in such things as fire that is itself completely nonarisen because it is not dependent on another thing and is not produced — that is said to be the self-nature of things.
To summarize: Whatever arises in any way from the eye-defect of rootignorance is taken to be the conventional world of entities, but by seeing it free of conventions it becomes the world of the nobles who are free of the eye-disease of root-ignorance — that has its own nature and it is named the "self-nature" of these entities. In addition, it should be understood that Nagarjuna presented this as the definition of "self-nature": "Self-nature is non-produced and not dependent upon anything else (MK 15.2cd)." And this self-nature of entities, which is by nature ever nonarisen, is without selfnature in the conventional sense because it is a nonentity without any specific nature. Thus, it should be understood that there is no self-nature of any entity. (That is, there are no real entities and so no real "self-nature.")
As the Buddha said: "The wise one who understands that entities are nonentities is never obsessed with entities. The one who is never obsessed with entities attains the peace of mind beyond all words."

Other-Nature and Other-Existence

Objection : Even if entities are not self-existent, there is at least the conventional existence of "other-nature" (i.e., a self-existent entity having a nature that is other than another real entity's self-nature), since this has not been refuted. And if other-nature exists, then self-nature will also exist since the existence of other-nature cannot be established apart from self-nature.

Reply: Nagarjuna replies to this claim [266]:
[3] In the absence of self-nature, how can there be "other-nature"? For the self-nature of another entity is called "other-nature."

In this way, any entity whatsoever with its own self-nature can be designated "other" since it is related to some other entity with its own self-nature. If heat is the self-nature of fire, it is designated "other" with respect to fluidity, the self-nature of water. But since nothing whatsoever has a "self-

nature" when examined by those on their way to liberation, how can there be "othernature"?

Objection : Even if there is no "self-nature" or "other-nature," nevertheless there are entities that exist because this has not been excluded. And such entities will either be self-existent or will exist through other-existence (i.e., be self-existent or be produced by another self-existent entity). Thus, it follows that there is both self-existence and other-existence.

Reply: Nagarjuna also replies to this claim:

[4] Without self-existence and other-existence, how can there be an entity? When there is self-existence or other-existence, then an entity is established.

If one thinks an entity truly exists, it must be either self-existent or otherexistent. But as previously explained, there is neither self-nature nor othernature. And because there are neither of these, it must be accepted that there cannot be a truly existing entity either (since what is real must have a selfnature or other-nature).

The Absence of an Entity

Objection : Although you have ruled out the existence of entities, nevertheless there is the absence of entities since you have not ruled that out. Thus, entities must exist because the opposite — their absence — exists.

Reply: Entities would exist if their absence were established. But Nagarjuna says this is not so [267]:

[5] If an entity is not established, the absence of an entity (i.e., a "non-entity") is certainly not established, since it is an entity that has changed (i.e., "becoming otherwise") that people call a "nonentity."

Accordingly, if any entity were established, then the absence of an entity would be established as its "otherness." Such entities as pots are conventionally said to be absent if they cease from their current state and become otherwise. But if such entities have not been established as truly existing, how can absent entities be "other" from them (since only what is real can be either the same or different from another real thing)? It follows that there is no other-existence either. Thus, self-existence, other-existence, and the absence of existence are all not admissible. They are misperceptions by those whose spiritual vision is blinded by the defect of root-ignorance.

The Buddha's Teaching on Self-Existence

[6] Those who perceive "self-existence," "other-existence," "an entity," and "the absence of an entity" do not perceive the truth in the Buddha's teaching.

Those delude themselves that they are faithfully expounding the teachings of the perfectly realized one when they declare the self-existence of entities, saying for example that "solidity" is the self-existent nature of earth, or that the experience of an entity is the self-existent nature of sensation, or that

reflecting an object is the self-existent nature of cognition. And they explain other-existence by claiming that cognition is other than the object of cognition and that sensation is other than both. They explain cognition and the other bodily aggregates as existing when they are in the present and as not existing when they are in the past. They do not explain the supremely profound truth of dependent-arising since the existence of self-existence and other-existence is, as demonstrated, contrary to what is proper. But the selfexistence of things is not proclaimed by the perfectly realized ones, which is contrary to the evidence, because of their independent, incorrigible, perfected enlightenment concerning the true nature of things.

[268] Now the wise say that the teaching of the revered buddhas is a "valid means of knowledge" since it is in accord with what is proper and is free of contradictions. [269] And because it is derived from the realized ones who are completely free of any flaws, it has authority since it is an authentic guide for those who are on the way to liberation, and because it comes from seeing reality as it truly is, the worldly can attain nirvana if it is their foundation. "Authority" is characterized as the teachings only of those who are perfectly enlightened. Doctrines that differ from this are not in accord with what is proper and thus are declared not to be valid means of knowledge but false doctrines.

Thus, the views of self-existence, other-existence, entities and the absence of entities are void of acceptability and are not the way things truly are. So for the guidance of those desiring liberation, Nagarjuna says:

[7] In his Discourse to Katyayana*, both "is" and "is not" are denied by the blessed one who has made known both "being" and "nonbeing."*

The Buddha says in the *Discourse to Katyayana*: "The unenlightened, clinging tenaciously to existence or nonexistence, are not liberated. They are not liberated from the suffering of birth, old age, disease, death, grief, mourning, and sorrow. They are not freed from the prison of the cycle of rebirths, based as it is in personal existence. They are not freed from the painful sorrow of a mother's death or a father's death, and so forth. This text is taught in all Buddhist schools. [270] Thus, on its authority and from the arguments given above, the intelligent should not reasonably hold the views of self-existence, other-existence, existence, and nonexistence since they are totally opposed to the words of the perfectly realized one who rejected them.

Of precisely what nature is the Buddha himself? He comprehends existence and nonexistence. One whose nature it is to comprehend existence and nonexistence is "a comprehender of existence and nonexistence." From his complete grasp of self-existence from the point of view of what is actually real as it relates to existence and nonexistence as explained here, only the Buddha is said to be a comprehender of existence and nonexistence. Thus, he rejects both the view that entities exist and the view that they do not exist. Thus, it is inadmissible to insist that the way things really are can be seen in terms of "existence" or "nonexistence."

In the *Ratnakuta Sutra*, it says: "To say 'Something is' is one extreme. To say 'Something is not' is one extreme. What avoids these two extremes is said to be without a defining nature (since nothing is real), beyond establishment, unrelated, imperceptible (since there is nothing real to see), without an abode (in the external world), and not open to conceptualization. This is designated 'the middle way.' It is the correct way toregard the true nature of things." In the *Samadhiraja Sutra*, it says: "'It is' and

‘It is not’ are two views. ‘It is pure’ and ‘It is impure’ are two views. The wise abandon these views without advancing a proposition in the middle. “It is” and “It is not,” “It is pure” and “It is not pure” — these are disputation. Suffering is not ended by engaging in disputation — it is brought to an end by *not* engaging in disputation.”

Self-Existence and Change

Objection : [271] But if there is the self-existence of such things as fire, where is the objection? *Reply*: The objection has already been given: a self-existent nature that arises from causes and conditions is something produced, and so forth (and so is not self-existent). In addition, if anything such as fire were self-existent, it would already exist and could never change (for what is real is permanent and cannot change). Nagarjuna says:

[8ab] If existence existed by its own nature, there could be no nonexistence of it.
If it is the self-nature of such entities as fire to be self-existent, then such a self-existent entity whose nature it is to exist could not change.
[8cd] For the change in the nature of something self-existent never occurs.

If the nature of such entities as fire were as you suppose, it would be selfexistent. And then, because of the unchangeability of what is real, “becoming other” (i.e., any change) could never be possible. For example, infinite space would never change. So too, there could be no change in such entities as fire because it is their nature to exist as they are (and not as something else).

But in fact the disappearance of entities is seen, either through change or through a disruption of their continuity (i.e., ceases). Thus, because it is there nature to change, self-existence cannot be the true nature of entities — rather, it should be clear that their nature is like the heat of hot water (i.e., produced).

Objection : If change is impossible for anything that exists by its own nature and yet change is perceived, you claim that there is no true nature of such entities. But then Nagarjuna himself says:

[9ab] Since such a self-existent nature does not exist, of what can there be a change in natures?

[272] That is, how can there be change in something that, like a (totally nonexistent) lotus in the sky, is not real by its own nature? One does not perceive change in something that by its nature does not exist. Thus, because change is experienced there must be things that are self-existent by their nature.

Reply : If accordingly there is a self-existent nature in entities since there can be no change in anything that has no essential nature (since nothing unreal can change) and yet there is the direct experience of change, then:

[9cd] But if such a nature existed, of what would there be such a change?

Following your position, how indeed can there be change in anything that exists by its own self-existent nature at this time? There can be no change in anything that exists by its own nature. Thus,

change is impossible in any way. Thus, (since change is perceived) it should be realized that there are no selfexistent, real entities.

When we said earlier that there could be no self-existence because change is perceived, that was stated concerning the experience of change as understood by others. At no time have we agreed that there is in fact change at all in anything (real). Rather, the self-existence of any entity is totally nonexistent — all basic phenomena of the experienced world are in fact nonexistent (from the ultimate point of view) and without self-existence. Thus, change in such (nonexistent) entities is nonexistent. But for one who believes in the existence and nonexistence of entities, it follows inevitably for him, so believing, (that he accepts real change).

Permanence and Annihilation

[10ab] To say "It is" is to grasp for permanence. To say "It is not" is to grasp for complete annihilation.
[273] It is implied here that the views of "permanence" and "annihilation" are obstacles on the path to the final peace and that they cause great suffering.
[10cd] Thus, the clear-sighted should not adhere to either "It is" or "It is not."
Supposing the views of real existence and real nonexistence, there are the views of permanence and annihilation. Why? Because:

[11] For the claim "Whatever exists through self-existence does not not exist" entails the view of eternal permanence. The claim "It does not now exist, but did exist before" entails the view of complete annihilation.

What is said to exist by self-existence can at no time not exist because selfexistence is constantly in the same state (and so the entity is permanent/eternal). Thus, if one agrees that entities currently exist, then one holds the eternalist view. And if one agrees that something really existed in the past but now has ceased, one says "It does not exist" and is caught in the annihilationist view. But for whom "a self-existent entity" is not understandable — since the self-existence of anything is never directly perceived — there is no involvement with the eternalist and annihilationist views.

Objection : Those who suppose there is no self-existence of entities but do not hold the eternalist view, since they reject the reality of entities, are inevitably caught up in the annihilationist view. (Thus, Madhyamikas are in fact ontological nihilists.)

Reply : The annihilationist view does not arise in this manner. Those who suppose that at one time something existed by self-existence and who perceive at a later time that this something has disappeared hold that entities are not real because they reject what they previously perceived as "selfexistent." [274] But when one is free of that eye-defect, one no longer perceives things as the do those who with an eye-defect see hair in front of them. When such a one then says "Entities do not really exist (from the point of view of what is truly real)," he is not claiming "Everything is nonexistent," for then there would be nothing to be negated. (Thus, there is something real there, although there is no self-existence and so no self-existent entities.) In order to remove the persisting illusions of the deluded, we, like those freed from the eye-defect, declare "Entities in themselves do

not truly exist." In saying this, we have not become caught up in the annihilationist view — rather, we are attempting to help others. As one text says: "One who supposes the real existence of desire, hatred, and delusion and later claims that they have ceased is indeed an annihilationist," and so forth.

Objection : Yogacharas and others who suppose that the mind and its objects are real only in mutual dependence avoid the view of eternalism since there is no self-existence in the dependence they conceive, [275] and they avoid the view of annihilationism because dependent mental states, which are responsible for the removal of mental afflictions, really do exist.

Reply : How can such people avoid the twin views? What is projected by the mind is nonexistent, but what depends on the mind exists — thus, both views operate here. Further, your exposition is unacceptable since it has been shown that the self-existence of what is dependent is inadmissible. Thus, the Madhyamaka position alone is free of the twin views of eternalism and annihilationism, not the positions of the Yogacharas and others. As Nagarjuna says in the *Ratnavali*: "Ask the ordinary people, along with the Samkhyas, the Vaisheshikas, Jainas, and Pudgalavadins (Buddhists who hold there is a "person") who maintain the doctrine of a (real) person and (real) bodily aggregates whether they proclaim to the world what passes beyond real existence and total nonexistence. Thereby know that our doctrine that passes beyond the doctrines of real existence and total nonexistence is called "the ambrosia of the profound teaching of the buddhas."

[276] Our objective is the enlightenment of those people who need guidance. As a useful means to understanding the ultimate truth, the Buddha in his unlimited compassion taught the doctrines of the Yogacharas and the Sammitiyas who believe in the existence of an individual "person." But their texts are only texts of provisional meaning, not final meaning. As it is said in the *Samadhiraja Sutra*: "One who can distinguish the ultimate truth in the texts knows that the Buddha taught the absence of self-existence in entities. He knows that all mention of 'persons,' 'beings,' and 'selves' are only of provisional meaning." This point is repeatedly found in the teachings of the *Akshamati Sutra* and other texts. The cycle of death and rebirth endures as long as the entanglement of the twin views that entities are real or unreal endures. When those who genuinely strive for liberation realize this, they are freed from the twin views and they correctly embrace the middle way.

As the Buddha said in the *Samadhiraja Sutra*: "Let there be an end to the knowledge of existence and nonexistence — all is unreal and thus inaccessible to thought (since there is no real entity to know). Those who follow their inclination to conceptual projection will suffer countless rebirths. [277] Those who are wise understand that entities are nonentities are never obsessed with entities. [278] Those who are never obsessed with entities attain the peace of mind beyond all words." "When the Buddha, the sage, the king of truth, the revealer of all truth, appears, the refrain is sounded from the grass, bushes, trees, plants, rocks, and mountains: all basic phenomena of the experienced world are without self-existence!" "However far mere words reach in the realms of the world, all are without self-existence,none are real, and the call of the Buddha, the guide and teacher of all beings, resounds that far!"

To claim "Something exists" is to say that it has being-ness. But eternal being is not itself the self-existent nature of any particular entity. All basic phenomena of the experienced world are not real but empty of being since as particulars they are not self-existent by their nature. This is found in the Perfection of Wisdom texts. The self-existence of particular entities is contrary to cognition. "The

refrain is sounded that all basic phenomena of the experienced world are without self-existence!" — the meaning of similar texts is to be understood in this sense. [279] "However far mere words reach in the realms of the world, (it is proclaimed) 'All are without self-existence, none are real!'"

In sum, the intention is to renounce the reality of entities. Saying that entities are not real is precisely the same as saying that they have no selfexistence.

Chapter 18: The Self
Conceptual Projection

Objection: [350] By the ceasing of what do mental afflictions and karmic actions cease?
Reply: Nagarjuna says:

[5] From the destruction of the mental afflictions resulting from karmic actions, there is the liberation from rebirth. The afflictions arise from conceptualizations that make distinctions between entities. These conceptualizations come from projecting distinctions onto reality. But such conceptual projections cease through emptiness.

. . . Karmic actions and mental afflictions result from conceptualizations that make distinctions between entities. Such conceptualizations are the product of projecting distinctions (onto reality) that has occurred throughout the cycle of rebirths that is without a beginning. Such projections consist of knowledge, the objects of knowledge, words, what is expressed, those who act, acts, means of action, actions, pots, cloth, diadems, chariots, objects, feelings, women, men, gain, loss, happiness, sorrow, fame, infamy, blame, praise, and so forth.

The world resulting from conceptual projection is ended in its entity by (seeing) emptiness — i.e., when one sees that emptiness is the self-nature of everything. How is this to be understood? When things are seen as existing, there is the world of conceptual projection. If those filled with desire do not perceive the daughter of a barren woman to be a (real) fair young woman, they do not enter the territory of conceptual projection. And by not entering the territory of conceptual projection, they do not generate conceptualizations that make distinctions between entities. [351] By not entering the world of conceptualizations, founded on the view of a "self" arising from an attachment to "I" (the self) and "mine" (what pertains to the self), mental afflictions do not arise. And by the non-arising of the mental afflictions based on a sense of "I" grounded in the view of a real being, karmic actions that are good, bad, and neutral are not committed. Because these acts are not committed, there is no experience of the jungle of the cycle of rebirths that is a multitude of births, aging, dying, suffering, lamentation, pain, sadness, and torment.

Thus, yogins, steadfastly seeing emptiness, do not take the bodily aggregates, sense-fields, or the bases of cognition as self-existent. By not taking the nature of things as self-existent, they do not enter the territory of conceptual projection. By not entering the territory of conceptual projection, they do not form conceptualizations that make distinctions between entities. By not forming such conceptualizations, mental afflictions founded on the view of a "self" arising from an attachment to "I" and "mine" do not arise. By the nonarising of the mental afflictions founded on the view of a "self," karmic acts are not committed. Because the yogins do not commit karmic acts, they do not

experience the cycle of rebirths that is birth, aging, and death. Thus, by attaining the emptiness that has the characteristic of the peace coming from stilling all conceptual projection, conceptualizations based in conceptual projection that make distinctions between entities cease. By such conceptualization ceasing, all karmic actions and mental afflictions cease. By the ceasing of karmic actions and mental afflictions, a new birth does not occur.

For these reasons, emptiness is called “nirvana” because it has the characteristic of extinguishing all conceptual projection. As it is stated in Aryadeva’s *Four Hundred Verses*: “The buddhas have explained that the doctrine in brief is this: nonviolence in action andthat emptiness is nirvana. Here in our tradition there are only these two (teachings) (CS 12.23).”

But Bhavaviveka, not understanding the direct knowledgeof emptiness of the disciples and solitary buddhas as explained, gives this account: [352] the disciples see all that is caused by others and that ceases each moment as devoid of “I” and “mine”; so too, they see “I” and “mine” as having selfexistence; they see only the basic phenomena of theexperienced world as arising and ceasing. Thus, the self is the object of the sense of “self.” But in the absence of this sense there is no self. This sense being nonexistent, in no way is there any such internal or external reality. Without the sense of “mine,” one is free of “I” and “mine” and the sense of a self-existent “I.” It is only a conventional usage. How much more is this so for the great bodhisattvas who reside in the wisdom without conceptualizations that make distinctions between entities and who see that all compound things (including persons) do not arise. Thus, it is said: “What is without a sense of “I” and “mine” does not exist.”

Thus, Bhavaviveka does not follow Nagarjuna in this regard, as demonstrated in *Entering the Middle Way*: [353] “The seventh stage of the bodhisattva’s path named ‘Traveling Far’ (in which bodhisattvas surpass the knowledge of the disciples) is the domain of cognition.” In the *Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*: “One who longs for the enlightenment of the disciples can learn so from this Perfection of Wisdom scripture; one who longs to attain the enlightenment of the solitary buddhas can also learn so from this scripture. One who longs for the supreme and perfect enlightenment of the great beings (i.e., the fully-enlightened buddhas) can learn so in this Perfection of Wisdom scripture.” It states further: [354] “Whoever desires to become a disciple, a solitary buddha, or a king of the doctrine will attain nothing without recourse to patience. Without patience, like a man who cannot see the banks of a river, he will not arrive at one bank or the other.”

The Buddha on the Self

Objection : If it is argued that reality as it truly is is free of the conceptualizations of “I” and “mine” regarding the interior or exterior of anything by not perceiving anything internal or external, then aren’t the following words of the Buddha in contradiction: “The self is the protector of the self. What else could be the protector? The learned attain heaven by controlling the self. The self is the witness of the self in both good and bad acts.” So too the *Samadhiraja Sutra*states: “Neither a bad act nor a good act perishes. The self bears the karmic fruit of each. The act and the fruit are not reborn. Nothing is established without a cause.”

Reply : [355] Didn’t the illustrious Buddha also say: “In this world, there is neither a being nor a self.

But beings and the basic phenomena of the experienced world all have causes." Also: "Physical form is not the self, nor does the self possess physical form, nor is the selfin physical form, nor is physical form in the self. So too, consciousness is not the self, nor does the self possess consciousness, nor is the self in consciousness, nor is consciousness in the self." And again: "All the basic phenomena of the experienced world are without a self."

Texts of Final Meaning and of Provisional Meaning

Objection : Why are the scriptures you quote not in contradiction with the scriptures we quote? *Reply*: Because to understand the scriptures, the intention of the illustrious ones' teachings in the former scriptures must be understood. It is generally accepted that there is a distinction between canonical texts of "final meaning" (whose plain meaning is accepted as definitive) and canonical texts of "provisional meaning" (whose meaning must be explained further) in the teaching of the illustrious buddhas who are devoted to awakening the lotuslike mind of all beings who are to be guided by the teachings and who are like a sun that never sets and whose great rays are great compassion, skill means, and knowledge. Thus, this:

[6] That "There is a self" has been disclosed. That "There is no self" has been taught. But by the Buddha it has been taught that "There is neither the self nor indeed what is not the self whatsoever."

[356] The meaning is this: there are some in the world (i.e., materialists) whose eye of their mind is completely covered by the cataract of the error arising from the false belief that there is no self. They do not see that objects are only what the worldly with normal vision see. They accept as true only conventional truths and find as real only the elements earth, water, fire, and air. They claim that the mind arises only from the great elements, like a fetus gestating. It is like the intoxicating drinks, flatulence, and so forth that result from the gestation of various materials like roots, boiled rice, and water. Thus, they deny a past and future life, the self, and another world, saying "This world is not real (i.e., eternal), and another world is not real; there is no karmic maturation of good and bad acts; no being is born (again)" and so forth. By denying all this, they turn their backs on pursuing such superb and desirable goals as heaven and the ultimate happiness. They constantly engage in bad acts and are headed for a great fall into the hells and so forth.

To end the erroneous views of these people, the buddhas have sometimes spoken of a self. [357] The illustrious buddhas — being devoted to fulfilling their vow to save all sentient beings and equipped with great compassion, skillful means, and wisdom, without equal, remaining in the world for its relief, physicians for the great disease of the mental afflictions, great kings of the needed medicine, and always willing to show kindness to those of the lowest, middle, or highest classes needing guidance — formulate their teaching in terms of the conventional truths of the world, with its 8,400 different states of sentient beings, with the aim of ending the bad acts of those of the lowest class. (To the lowest class, he taught "There is a self.")

The reason refuting the teaching of arising without a cause is that there is nothing without a cause. This was presented in detail in the chapter examining "action" and "actor" (MK 8) and in *Entering the Middle Way*. It is not necessary to refute this teaching again.

There are some, who like birds, are leashed by very long and strong bonds of attachment to "I" and "mine" that are produced by holding that the self is real. Even if such people go far and perform wholesome acts, they will not go beyond the three realms (the world created by desire, and the formed and formless realms created through meditation) and cannot attain the blissful city of nirvana where there is no aging and death. [358] Such people are the middle group of those in need of guidance. To them, the illustrious buddhas, in their desire to show favor to those who need guidance, have taught "There is no self" to weaken their attachment to a "self" and to awaken the desire for nirvana.

And there are some who have perfected their potential by success in their earlier practice through adherence to the profound doctrine. These in the highest class are free of attachment to a "self" and are capable of penetrating the supreme and profound true meaning of the excellent teachings of the silent one. To them, nirvana is near, and the Buddha, having seen their worthiness, thus taught "No self whatsoever either exists or does not exist." Even as seeing "There is a self" does not reflect reality as it truly is, so too seeing "There is no self" does not reflect reality as it truly is (since then one is still seeing reality through a conceptual prism). Thus, it is taught: "There is neither the self nor indeed what is not the self whatsoever."

As stated in the *Ratnakuta Sutra*: "'There is a self' is one extreme; 'There is no self' is the second extreme. What is betweenthese two extremes is said to be without form, beyond establishing, without objective support, invisible, without an abode, and not known to conceptualizing consciousness. That is named 'the middle way.' That is the true discrimination of the basic phenomena of the experienced world." [359] As Nagarjuna states in the *Jewel Garland of Advice*: "Indeed, grasping 'There is a self' or 'There is no self' is not how things really are. The great silent one eradicated the views of a sense of 'self' and 'non-self.' What is seen and heard and so forth is declared by the silent one to be not real and not nonexistent. Fromone proposition the counter-proposition arises, but neither is true (R 103-104)."

Thus, the teaching of the doctrine of the illustrious buddhas, in refuting that there is a self, that there is no self, and that there is both, takes into account the diverse dispositions of those to be guided of the lowest, middle, and highest classes. Thus, the scriptures cited by the opponent do not contradict Madhyamikas. This is why Aryadeva states: "First, turn away from unwholesome acts. Next, turn away from the notion of a 'self.' Finally, turn away from seeing all things as self-existent. Anyone who knows this is wise (CS 8.15)." And Nagarjuna states: "Just as a grammarian first teaches the alphabet to his students, so the Buddha first taught the doctrine in a way accessible to those to be converted. To some, the Buddha taught the doctrine to end clinging to demeritous deeds. To some, he taught it for the sake of achieving merit. To some, he taught the doctrine based on duality. To some, he taught doctrines not based on duality — [360] a doctrine that is profound and terrifying to those who are afraid. To some, he taught the inner core of and terrifying to those who are afraid. To some, he taught the inner core of 96)."

There is another interpretation of verse 6. The Samkhyas and others accept the teaching that there is an absence of a connection of a karmic act and its fruit in compound things that cease in each moment, but they still speak of a "self." And there are materialists who did not see a self in the cycle of rebirths, but they still accept the teaching of "no self." They say "There is no person outside the field

of the senses. Oh blessed one, the talk of the learned is the prattle of an animal." But just as those people who do not suffer from an eye-defect do not see such things as (illusory) hair and mosquitos that those people who do suffer from an eye-defect see, so do the buddhas in no way whatsoever see "self" and "non-self" as self-existent realities as the naive imagine. Thus, then: "'There is no 'self' or 'non-self' — that is the teaching of the buddhas."

(Then follows a long quotation from the *Tathagataguhya Sutra* that was probably added later on stilling conceptualizations and views of "self.")

Language and Reality as it Truly is

Objection : [364] If the illustrious buddhas did not teach "There is a self" or "There is no self," then what did they teach?
Reply: Nagarjuna answers:

[7] When the object of thought has ceased, then what can be named has ceased. The nature of all things is unarisen and unceasing, like nirvana.

If there is a something real to be designated, it would be taught. But when there is no object to designate and words are not applicable, there is nothing to be taught by the buddhas. Why is there nothing open to being designated? Because the object of thought has ceased. The "object of thought" means what thought has as its object. "Object" refers to an object that is graspable in thought. When thought has such an object, one can use words to attribute characteristics to it. But when thought does not have an object, to what can characteristics be attributed and how can words be used?

Why there is no object of thought is explained by Nagarjuna when he says: "Like nirvana, the nature of things neither arises nor ceases." As to the nature of things, it is said that the nature of phenomena — their self-nature, their fundamental nature — is like nirvana: unarisen and unceasing. Thus, thought cannot act in this regard. And when thought cannot act, how can characteristics be attributed? Without characteristics, how can words be used? Thus, it is now established that nothing at all is taught by the illustrious buddhas. Thus, Nagarjuna will later say: "The stilling of all conceptual support and the stilling of the projection of concepts onto reality is peace — no doctrine was taught by the Buddha in any place to anyone (MK 25.24)."

Objection : It may be so. [365] But what of the previous proposition: "The projection of concepts onto reality is ended by emptiness." How is that ended by emptiness?

Rely : Because the object open to being designated has ceased. The explanation is as before.
Objection: But it is also said: "It is by the nonperception of all things, both internal and external concerning, all ideas of an internal or external 'I' and 'mine' that the cessation is complete. This cessation is reality as it truly is." Could you state more precisely the way "reality as it is truly is" is?
Reply: To the first line of the verse "When the object of thought has ceased, then what can be named has ceased . . . " add" . . . from the point of view of reality as it truly is."
Objection: Why in "reality as it truly is" have the object that can be designated and the object of thought ceased?

Reply: It is said: “The nature of things neither arises nor ceases, as with nirvana.” [366] The explanation given above applies here.
In the *Tathagataguhya Sutra*, it is stated: “On the night when the Buddha became enlightened and attained complete and unsurpassable illumination and entered the nirvana without residue,during that time not a single syllable was uttered or expressed by the Buddha, nor did he address anyone, nor will he. Nevertheless, the doctrine is taught in different ways by the Buddha to all sentient beings who are to be helped — the gods, the demons, ordinary human beings, the accomplished human beings, legendary creatures, and so forth. By emitting one sound during one moment he taught the doctrine whose glare banishes darkness from people’s minds, awakens the great lotus of enlightenment in its many forms, dries up the ocean of old age and death, and confounds the many rays of the seven suns at the end of the cosmic age.”
[367] Thus, it is stated in the *Samadhiraja Sutra*: “When a buddha, the silent sage, the king of the doctrine, who proclaims all of the doctrine, appears, the words of the nonexistence of all entities resounds from the grass, bushes, trees, rocks, and mountains. Of the many sounds in the world, ‘No entities exist, none are real’ — all these sounds are the voice of a buddha, the guide of the world.”

The Question of Ontological Nihilism

Objection : [368] Madhyamikas are no different from nihilists who hold that nothing exists, since they claim that wholesome and unwholesome acts, actors, the fruit of action, and all entities in the world are empty of selfexistence. Indeed, nihilists hold “There is nothing.” Thus, Madhyamikas are not different from nihilists.

Reply : That is not so. Why? Because Madhyamikas propound the doctrine of arising dependently, and they hold that everything in this world and the next are without self-existence because all things arise dependently through the confluence of causes and conditions. As for nihilists who accept in self-existent natures, it is not because of entities’ emptiness of selfexistence that they affirm the nonexistence of another world and so forth. On the contrary, while accepting the reality of the present world because of its existence, they do not accept that one is born into this life from another or that one is born into another life from this one. Thus, they end up denying that things that are similar to what is perceived in this world exist elsewhere.

Objection : They hold the nonexistence of anything believed to be real in itself, and that is the same doctrine as yours.
Reply: This is not so. Why? Because Madhyamikas accept the existence of things in the conventional sense, the two doctrines are not in agreement.
Objection: But the doctrines are identical in substance.
Reply: Although they are similar in content in denying self-existence, they are not similar because they differ in how thedenial is applied. Consider a man who is accused of being a thief. Suppose one person who does not recognize the man clearly but, being urged by the man’s enemy, falsely gives testimony that he committed the crime. [369] And another person who witnessed the crime also accuses the man of the crime. Now, even though in content their accusations are identical, there is nevertheless a difference between the two accusers: the first is said to speak falsely and the second to speak the truth. When considered, the first committed an act of disgrace and demerit; the second did not.

And here it is the same case. Although there is no difference in content, the knowledge and claim of Madhyamikas do not correspond to those of the nihilists. For the former have correctly grasped the true self-nature of things, and the latter have not. There is a great difference in their discrimination between the worldly and the noble ones who practice even-mindedness, even though the former achieve an even-mindedness. So too, there is a great difference between those who are blind from birth and those who can see when they encounter the same precipice that is hard to cross. Just as that is so, so too there is a difference between Madhyamikas and nihilists. That is the teaching of the earlier masters.
But enough of these arguments! Let us return to explaining our topic.

The Graduated Teaching

Objection : If the nature of all things is "unarisen and unceased, like nirvana," and if there is no use of speech or thought concerning the true nature of things, then it is incommunicable and there is nothing for people to know concerning it.

Reply : Thus, to bring this teaching to people who need guidance, it is necessary to have recourse to a graduated teaching based on conventional truths. That is how the teaching can be communicated. This is that graduated teaching of the illustrious buddhas that introduces the ambrosia of reality as it truly is:

[8] The buddhas' teaching is this: everything is real or everything is not real; everything is both real and not real; everything is neither real nor not real.

[370] Concerning this it has been said: "What is most familiar to someone is naturally the most effective for him — for one who is bewildered cannot be a vessel for the teaching of the doctrine. Just as it is not possible to make a foreigner understand by means of a language other than his own, so the worldly cannot be made to comprehend except by worldly means." The same has been said by the illustrious Buddha: "The world quarrels with me. I do not I quarrel with the world. What is accepted by the worldly as existing is also accepted by me; what is not accepted by the worldly as existing is not accepted by me." That has been said in the scriptures.

The Buddha always taught as real the bodily aggregates, the elements, and the bases of cognition as they are known and perceived as real by those who wish to be guided — i.e., by those who suffer from the eye-defect of root-ignorance but in whom the desire has arisen to be taught the true nature of the diverse things that are generally accepted as real. His intention was to arouse the faith of the worldly in himself — this omniscient buddha who sees all and is aware of all that happens in the world. [371] For he has truly taught the origin, duration, and cessation of sentient beings, the outer limits of the world of the living, along with its causes and fruits, and pleasures and pains. And he has truly taught the physical world, beginning with the coursing of the winds and ending with the element space, with its many divisions.

Later, after those who are being guided have realized that the Buddha is omniscient, it is explained that all of this is not real. What is real does not change. But all that is compounded indeed changes because they are constantly ceasing. Thus, because of these changes, it is said that they are not real.

The words “or” and “and” in the verse are to be understood as joining the two views. The meaning is this: “All is real or not real.” To some it is taught that “Everything in the world is real and not real.” For the worldly, everything in the world is real, but it is unreal for the noble ones since it is not perceived (i.e., the everyday objects are not seen as real). To those who through following the practice for a long time see reality as it truly is and have eradicated almost completely the obstructions named “the roots of trees,” it is taught “Everything in the world is neither real nor unreal.” It is for severing the remaining residue of the obstructions that the two alternatives are rejected, as with a son of a barren woman one rejects the ideathat he is white or black.

That is the graduated teaching of the illustrious buddhas. The teaching sets people on the right path after they had detoured on the bad path. The teaching is flexible because it is graduated and is adapted to the needs of the people being guided.

[372] All of the teachings of the illustrious buddhas, who possess great compassion, knowledge of the means of helping others, are the means for attaining the ambrosia of reality as it truly is. The perfectly realized ones have not uttered a single word that is not for attainingthe ambrosia of reality as it truly is. Just as doctors administer the medicines that are appropriate for each sickness, so do the perfectly realized ones, wishing to aid those who need guidance, teach the doctrine adapted to their needs. The same is stated in Aryadeva’s *Four Hundred Verses*: “It is declared by the buddhas ‘It is real,’ ‘It is not real,’ ‘It is both real and not real,’ and ‘It is neither real nor not real.’ Indeed, does not everything called “medicine” depend on the illnesses being treated? (CS 8.20).”

Reality as it Truly is

Objection : The teachings of the buddhas is to introduce reality as it truly is. What then is the meaning of “reality as it truly is”?
Reply: This was stated above in verse 7: “When the object of thought has ceased, then what can be named has ceased.” This being so, what further objection can there be?
Objection: This may be so, nevertheless you must conform to the conventional truths of the worldly and speak by superimposing characteristics onto what is truly real.
Reply: Nagarjuna responds:

[9] The characteristic of what is actually real is this: not dependent upon another, peaceful, free of being projected upon by conceptual projections, free of thoughts that make distinctions, and without multiplicity.

[373] “Not dependent upon another” means that the nature of what is is not dependent upon anything else. It is said that this is not attained by the teaching by another but is attained on one’s own. Thus, it is those suffering from an eye-defect who see nonexistent things such as hair, mosquitos, and flies. When taught by those with sound vision, they still do not comprehend because they do not comprehend the true nature of the (illusory) hair since they cannot not see it as those with sound vision donot. Rather, the teaching of those with sound vision leads them only to the conviction that what they see is illusory. (However, when those suffering from the eye-defect are cured, they see clearly and see that there are no hair and so forth.) So too, when those suffering from the defect (of root-ignorance)are treated with the ointment of seeing the reality of emptiness, they are cured of the

defect and then attained the knowledge of reality as it truly is. They then comprehend reality as those who see. Thus, now they see that the true nature of entities is not dependent on anything. That is reality as it truly is.

"Peaceful" means to be completely without self-existence, just as the illusory hairs are without self-existence.

"Conceptual projections" means giving words substance (i.e., seeing things corresponding to words as real). "Free of being projected upon by conceptual projections" means that reality as it truly is cannot support speech.

[374] "Thoughts that make distinctions" are the wandering customs of thought. By the abandonment of that, "free of thoughts that make distinctions" means the way reality as it truly is without thoughts that make distinctions. As the scripture says: "What is the ultimate truth? There knowledge does not occur (since there are no entities corresponding to words to know). Of what use again is there in pouring forth words? That is the meaning of 'free of thoughts that make distinctions.'"

What has diverse objects is said to have multiplicity. This means that what is "without multiplicity" does not have diverse objects. As it is said in the *Satyadvayavatara Sutra*: "From the point of view of ultimate truth, the nature of all the basic phenomena of the experienced world is the same. . . . What is the sameness of all basic phenomena from the point of view of the ultimate truth? It is the sameness of not being produced and not arising of any basic phenomenon from the ultimate point of view. Why? [375] Because from the ultimate point of view, in nirvana all basic phenomena are indeed without multiplicity because of the complete lack of arising of basic phenomena. Just as the space in a clay pot and the space in a bejewelled pot are both the element 'space,' and thus there is no multiplicity from the ultimate point of view, so too from the ultimate point of view neither suffering nor purification arises in any manner. So too, the cycle of rebirths and also nirvana are identical to complete non-arising. From the ultimate point of view, there are no multiple factors in them. Why? Because from the ultimate point of view, there is no arising of any basic phenomenon of the experienced world."

Thus, one should understand that non-multiplicity is the characteristic of reality as it truly is because of the reality ofthe oneness of emptiness.

Conventional Reality

That is how the noble ones who have vanquished the cycle of birth, old age, and death speak of the characteristics of reality as it truly is. Concerning the characteristics of the way reality is in the conventional world, Nagarjuna says thus:

[10] Whatever arises dependently upon another thing is not that thing, nor is it different from that thing. Therefore, it is neither annihilated nor eternal.

[376] An effect arises dependent upon a cause, like a sprout of rice is born in dependence on a rice seed and a confluence of the conditions of the soil and so forth. It is not possible to say that the sprout is identical to the seed. If the seed were identical to the sprout, the cause and the effect would one and the same thing — a father and son would be identical. The two being identical, the seed would be taken as existing when there is a sprout, and the sprout would be taken as existing when there is a seed, and the seed would thus be eternal since it does not perish. One succumbs to the doctrine of

eternalism, with its many severe faults. Actions and their effects would not be connected. Thus, it is not permissible to say that the seed is identical to the sprout. But it is not different from it either: the sprout is not different from the seed since then the sprout would be produced without the seed. As Nagarjuna says: “If one thing is other than another thing, it would also exist without that other thing (MK 14.6).”

Thus, if the seed is found in the sprout, it does not perish. One falls into the Samkhya doctrine of “the effect pre-existing in the cause.”

Because the effect arises in dependence on the cause, it is not identical to the cause nor different from it. Thus, it is not permissible to say that the cause is annihilated or is eternal. As Aryadeva says: “Since entities arise and continue, they are not annihilated. And since they cease, permanence is not found (CS 10.25).” And it is stated in the *Lalitavistara Sutra*: “There is a sprout if there is a seed. The seed is not identical to the sprout. It is not different from the sprout nor identical to it. Thus, the nature of things is neither annihilated nor eternal.”

Chapter 24: The Four Noble Truths
Buddhist Objections to “Emptiness”

Objection: [475] Some may now object:

[1] If all this is empty, there is neither arising nor ceasing. And then for you, it follows that the four “noble truths” — the truth of suffering, its cause, the prescription of its cure, and the path to ending it — do not exist.

If you Madhyamikas establish that “all this” — the collection of all external and internal entities that there are — is empty, and thereby establish your teaching that all this does not arise, then many great faults befall you. Why? Because if you suppose that all this is empty of self-existence, then what is empty does not exist, and what cannot be said to exist cannot, like a son of a barren woman, either come to be or cease to be precisely because it does not exist (i.e., ontological nihilism). Thus, there is no arising or ceasing of any entity whatsoever. Because there is no arising or ceasing, it follows that for you, the advocates of emptiness, the four noble truths do not exist.

Reply : This is not so. Why? In our doctrine, the five bodily aggregates, which arise from a prior cause and are the product of conditions, are called “suffering” because of the anguish and suffering inherent in existing, because all change is suffering, and because of the suffering in anything compounded. [476] Only the noble ones, whose misperceptions have been eliminated, fully recognize this suffering — not those who are not noble, for they are victims of misperceptions and, in conformity with how they perceive, they define entities as having self-existence. Those with impaired sense-faculties due to illness or another affliction perceive sugar and the like as bitter, even though their true nature is sweetness. Just as in this cognition bitterness, not sweetness, is taken as real because the true nature of sugar is not perceived, so it is here. Even though the five bodily aggregates are by their self-nature suffering, still it is only those who clearly perceive the aggregates to have the nature of suffering truly understand the world to be suffering — not those who perceive things as otherwise than they really are, since they are victims of misperceptions. That the aggregates are

suffering by their nature is true only for the noble ones. That is way the truth of suffering is said to be a “noble truth.”

Objection : But are not painful feelings defined as “suffering” by those who are not noble? In that case, how is it that suffering is a truth only for the noble ones?

Reply : Because the truth of suffering is not limited to only feelings of pain (as the unwise believe) but encompasses (the suffering of) all five bodily aggregates. Thus, only for the noble ones is this truth called a “noble truth.”

It is said: “An eye-lash in the palm of the hand is not felt, but if it gets into one’s eye it causes discomfort and torment. So too, the naive, like the hand, do not know that the compounded is suffering, but the noble ones, like the eye, alone tremble at the torments.” Thus, since the truth of suffering exists only the noble ones, it is known as a “nobletruth.”

Objection : But for there to be a noble truth of suffering, there must be arisings and ceasings-to-be. But if nothing comes to be or ceases because all entities are empty of self-existence, then there can be no suffering. And if there is no suffering, how can there be a truth concerning its cause? For the cause from which suffering arises and grows is called its “cause,” and this is understood as the mental afflictions arising from actions that in turn arise from the thirst for existence and desires. But if there is no effect of mental afflictions, then there is no cause of suffering since there is no “cause” without an “effect.”

[477] When suffering disappears and is never to arise again, this is called “cessation.” But if there is no suffering, of what is there a “cessation”? Thus, there is no “cessation of suffering.” And if there is no suffering, there is no noble truth of the “cessation of suffering.” And if there is no cessation of suffering, how can there be the way of the “eightfold path” that leads to the cessation of suffering? Thus, there is no noble truth of the way either.

Thus, if one affirms “All entities are empty of self-existence,” then it follows that there are no four noble truths. And what harm results from that? Nagarjuna states it:

[2] And since the four noble truths do not exist, then the recognition of suffering, the elimination of its cause, the cultivation of ending it through meditation, and the realization of the end of suffering cannot occur.

If there are no four noble truths, then there is (1) no perfect knowledge of the truth of suffering in what is impermanent, selfless, and open to suffering, (2) no destruction of the cause of suffering, (3) no acceptance of the way leading to the cessation of suffering, and (4) no final realization of its cessation. Because there are no four noble truths, there is no perfect knowledge of the truth of suffering and so forth. And what is the harm of that? Nagarjuna again states it:

[3] If these four things do not exist, then the four noble fruits of the Buddhist way of life — “entering the stream” leading to nirvana, “once returning” for a final rebirth, “never returning,” and “attaining nirvana in this life” — are not found. [478] [4] If the eight types of practitioners connected to the four fruits (i.e., those who aspire for one of the four fruits and those who have

attained one) do not exist, so too the community of monks and nuns does not exist. In addition, because the four noble truths do not exist, there is no true doctrine. [5ab] With no true doctrine and no religious community, how can there be the Buddha?

When in this manner there is no perfect knowledge of suffering, no destroying its cause, and so forth, then none of the four fruits of the Buddhist way of life — "entering the stream," "once returning," "never returning," and "attaining nirvana in this life" — are possible because they do not exist. Why? [479] In our school, the complete elimination of the desires receives the name "fruit." (The correlations of the progressive elimination of mental afflictions with different stages of the fruits then follows. The point is that the different moments of realization require the possibility of the four achievements beginning with the perfect knowledge of suffering.)

[487] If there are no four noble truths and no four achievements beginning with the perfection of the knowledge of suffering, then there are no persons who would be progressing through these stages and realizing them, since there are no attainments by which, by inner acceptance and direct experience, these noble truths are grasped. Thus, there would be no community of Buddhist monks. For, if there are no eight categories of holy persons (i.e., those persons aspiring to the four noble fruits and those who have attained any of them), there would be no community of monks and nuns since it exists by people having attained the clarity acquired by comprehending and directly experiencing the doctrine that is inseparable from the illustrious Buddha despite the efforts of demons.

In addition, if there are no four noble truths, there is no true doctrine. For what is true for the noble ones is the Buddhist doctrine. [488] The truth of the cessation of suffering is the fruit of the doctrine, and the truth of the path is the fruit of being introduced to the doctrine. That is the doctrine of final release. The teachings that clarify it fully are the doctrine of the Buddhist tradition. If there are no four noble truths, all of this is nothing. As it is said, "If there are no noble truths, the doctrine is not found. If there is no doctrine and no community, how could there be an enlightened one?"

If the (non-Madhyamaka) doctrine expounded here (in this objection) is true, then without contradiction there could be a buddha who is fully enlightened concerning all aspects of every basic phenomenon of the experienced world because he could realize both the basic truth and its applications. So too, if there is a community of monks and nuns, then there is a reservoir of knowledge that is increased by its teachings, and a reservoir of merit is increased by taking refuge in the community, by revering it, and by making donations to it, and thus one gradually can become enlightened.

In addition, if there were no community of monks and nuns, there can be no aspirants for the attainments of stream-enterer, once-returner, and so forth. Now, if no one progresses through the various attainments, no one can achieve enlightenment, for a blessed one invariably must abide in these fruits and must be a member of the community itself. Thus, if there is no community, there is no blessed buddhas.

Moreover, the blessed ones themselves are included in the community because they are no longer learners. Some claim that the buddhas are members of the community because of the saying "the community of monks and nuns with a buddha at its head." In their opinion, it is self-evident that "If there is no Buddhist doctrine and community, how can there be an enlightened one?"

[489] Madhyadeshikas, based on the series of ten stages of a bodhisattva's career set forth in the *Mahavastu*, maintain that a bodhisattva, as one firmly set in the first stage of the bodhisattva's path, having attained the way of insight, is also included in the community. Thus, if there is no community, there are no bodhisattvas either. How then could there be an enlightened one? That is self-evident. So:

[5cd] Thus, speaking in this way you indeed reject the three jewels of Buddhism.

By proclaiming that the emptiness of entities, you reject the Buddha, the Buddhist doctrine, and the Buddhist community of monks and nuns. These are called the "three jewels" of the Buddhist tradition because they are difficult to attain, they arise only rarely, they are inaccessible to those of little merit, and they are of great value.

In addition:

[6] Speaking in this way about "emptiness," you reject the true existence of the fruits, of true and untrue doctrines, and of all mundane conventions.

[490] The word "emptiness" is the object of "speaking in this way." If all entities are empty of self-existence, then nothing exists. If so, wholesome and unwholesome actions, along with their desired and undesired fruits, do not exist since they are among "all entities." So too, all these mundane orders "Do," "Cook," "Eat," "Stand," "Go," "Come," and so forth are among "all entities," and so do not make sense. So too, all the basic phenomena of the experienced world do not exist.

Thus, your argument, which was meticulously described above, is not the superior one.

The Madhyamaka Interpretation of "Emptiness"

Reply *: [7] We say here that you do not comprehend the purpose of emptiness. Therefore, emptiness and the significance of emptiness distress you.*

By way of your discriminations, you superimpose onto the word "emptiness" the false meaning of "nonexistence." You slander us with such arguments as "If all things are empty of self-existence, there is no arising or ceasing (Pr 223)." You fall into great distress and torment yourself badly by various false discriminations.

However, the meaning of "emptiness," which is carefully described here in this treatise, is different from the meaning you suppose. Not understanding the meaning of "emptiness," you do not understand emptiness itself. Nor do you discern the purpose of "emptiness." And because you do not understand the nature of things as they really are, your account is erroneous and is unrelated to our own understanding.

Now then, what is the purpose of "emptiness of self-existence"? It is given in by Nagarjuna: "From the destruction of the afflictions resulting from karmic actions, there is the liberation from rebirth. The afflictions arise from thoughts that make distinctions between entities. These thoughts come from

projecting distinctions onto reality. But such conceptual projections cease through (seeing) emptiness (MK 18.5)." [491] This means that emptiness is taught for the purpose of stilling all conceptual projection without exception. Thus, the purpose of emptiness is to completely pacify the entire complex of named entities. However, by erroneously discriminating the meaning of "emptiness" as "nonexistence," you actually strengthen your entanglement in the net of conceptual projection. You simply do not understand the purpose of "emptiness"!

And now, what is the "emptiness of self-existence" itself? This too was defined by Nagarjuna: "The characteristic of what isactually real is this: not dependent upon another, peaceful, free of being projected upon by conceptual projections, free of thoughts that make distinctions, and without multiplicity (MK 18.9)." How can emptiness, whose nature is the end of conceptual projection, be described as having the nature of "nonexistence"? You indeed do not know emptiness either. We explain below how the term developed: "Whatever is dependently arisen, we call that 'emptiness.' This indicator, once comprehended, is in fact itself the 'middle way' (MK 24.18)." As the blessed one has said: "Whatever arises from conditions, that is not arisen because it does not arise through self-existence. (That is, because it is not self-existent, it is not real and thus cannot arise.) Whatever depends on conditions is said to be empty of self-existence. Whoever understands emptiness is wise."

Thus, the meaning of "dependent-arising" is the same as the meaning of "emptiness." But the meaning of the term "nonexistence" is not the same as the meaning of "emptiness." By attributing the meaning of "nonexistence" to "emptiness," you slander us. Thus, you do not know the meaning of "emptiness" at all. By this baseless criticism, you only torment yourself.

The Two Types of Truth

Now, who is it who criticizes us in this manner? [492] It is one who follows the words of the texts literally but does not know the indisputable distinction between the two types of truth as taught in the sayings of the Buddha. That is why Nagarjuna, out of compassion for his opponents, states the following to clarify the indisputable distinction of two types of truth as taught in the sayings of the Buddha in order to cast out the misunderstanding of the doctrine by others:

[8] The buddhas' teaching of the doctrine rests upon two categories of truths: truth based on mundane conventions, and truth from the ultimate point of view.

Now, the teaching of the doctrine by the blessed Buddha in the world is indeed developed based on the two types of truth. What are these? The conventional truth of the mundane world and the truth from ultimate (ontological) point of view. It is said of them: "The world is said to have a permanent self among the bodily aggregates. Indeed, it is upon these that it is based." Here, the everyday (conventional) "person" is called "the world" because the idea of a "person" is dependent on the five bodily aggregates.

"The conventional" means "being completely obscured." Indeed, the ignorance (of ultimate ontological matters) is called "the conventional" because it completely obscures the nature of things as they really are. Alternatively, "the conventional" means that "entities are mutually dependent" (e.g., the concepts of "cause" and "effect" are interdependent and thus not independently real). Or,

“the conventional” means “agreement with worldly practices,” which itself is the characteristic of “what designates” and “what is designated,” “knowing” and “what is known,” and so forth.

[493] The “conventional world” refers to conventions of the world. What would be a non-mundane convention from which we distinct the mundane? Here “mundane” refers to the categories as they are constituted in the everyday world — thus, there is no room for such a question here. But those who persistently perceive entities erroneously because of their impaired senses — e.g., an eye-defect or jaundice — are “non-mundane.” What they take the world to be is non-conventional. Conventional truths are distinct from that. This is explained fully in *Entering the Middle Way*, from which this can be understood.

What is true in the everyday world is the conventional truths of the world. The totality without exception of words and practices based on the distinction between “naming” and “what is named” and between “knowing” and “what is known,” and so forth, is what is meant by “the conventional truths of the world.” Such a world does not exist from the point of view of what is actually real. Thus, it has been said: “When the domain of thought has ceased, then what can be named has ceased. The nature of all things is, like nirvana, unarisen and unceased (MK 18.7).”

This being so, how could words or discursive knowledge be valid from the point of view of what is truly real? For what is real is not dependent on anything but itself, tranquil (due to the absence of distinct entities), and accessible to the noble ones. It is beyond all conceptual projection and cannot be pointed to or known (as an object). As stated earlier: “Not dependent on anything but itself, tranquil, not differentiated by conceptual projection, not of a varying form — this is how ‘reality as it truly is’ is spoken of.”

[494] What has a surpassing objective is the ultimate truth. That alone is truth/reality from the ultimate point of view. The distinction between the two types of truths can be studied in detail in *Entering the Middle Way* (MA 6.22-44).

The teaching of the Buddhist doctrine by the illustrious Buddha is based on this twofold nature of truth. With the structureof the teaching thus established, Nagarjuna states:

[9] Those who do not discern the distinction of these two categories of truths do not discern the profound truth in the teachings of the buddhas.

Objection : If reality as it truly is has the nature of being free of conceptual projection, let it be so. But why then is there the teaching of what has nothing to do with the ultimate truth — the bodily aggregates, the basic phenomena of the experienced world, the sense-faculties, the sense-fields, Buddhist truths, dependent-arising, and so forth? For what is not real should be rejected, and why teach something that is to be rejected?

Reply : This is true indeed. But the ultimate truth cannot be pointed out or taught without accepting as a base the mundane conventions of naming and what is the named, knowing and what is known, and so forth. And if the ultimate truth cannot be pointed out, it cannot be comprehended, and if the ultimate truth is not comprehended, nirvana cannot be attained. Thus, Nagarjuna, pointing this out, states:

[10] Without relying upon mundane convention, the truth from the ultimate point of view cannot be taught. And without reaching the truth from the ultimate point of view, nirvana cannot be achieved.

Thus, mundane truths, as defined above, must first be admitted since they are the means to attaining nirvana. They are like receptacles for one who wants water.

Misperceiving Emptiness

Thus, whoever rejects in this way the establishment of the twofold nature of truth indicated by "conventional truth" and "truth from the ultimate point of view" is a person of little intelligence, and [495]:

[11] Seeing emptiness incorrectly destroys a person of little intelligence, just as does a snake incorrectly grasped or a spell incorrectly cast.

The yogin, having realized that conventional truth arises only from ignorance and is empty of self-existence, perceives that "emptiness of self-existence" is a higher truth than the mundane and does not fall into the dualism of "it is" and "it is not" (i.e., eternalism and annihilationism). He does not afterward dismiss the self-existence of entities since he has found no self-existence in them (and so there is nothing to dismiss). Thus, he does not ask, as some may, "How is what was once real now no more?" (since he sees that entities were never real to begin with and have not changed). Nor does he reject altogether the everyday worldly conventions, which are like a reflection (i.e., not self-existent or totally nonexistent but dependent on something else). Thus, he does not reject karmic action and its fruit, the distinction between wholesome and unwholesome actions, and so forth. On the other hand, he, from the point of view of what is actually real, does not impute self-existence to everyday entities since he experiences such entities as karmic action and its fruit as not self-existent and does not experience them as self-existent.

But one eager for liberation who grasps at emptiness in all compound entities and dwells on it without seeing the distinction between the two types of truth in this way would either imagine that all compound entities are nonexistent or that the emptiness of entities itself exists like an entity — i.e., he imagines "emptiness" to be a self-existent reality. Either way, the doctrine of emptiness, wrongly understood, inevitably destroys such a one. Why? Because if one imagines that "All the world is empty" means "Everything does not exist in any way," then a serious heresy has befallen him. [496] It is said: "This doctrine, wrongly understood, causes the ruin of the unintelligent, since they sink into the impurity of the doctrine of total nonexistence (R 119)." On the other hand, if he does not take the position of denying all entities, then he must reject their emptiness, thinking "How can entities be empty of self-existence when they are perceived by the worlds of gods, demons, and humans?" Thus, having rejected the idea that being empty of self-existence only means that worldly entities are not self-existent, he proceeds to an evil destiny that results from unwholesome acts that destroy the true doctrine. It is said in Nagarjuna's *Jewel Garland of Advice*: "Some foolish ones who think themselves learned, do not understand the doctrine properly and thereby fall into a terrible hell, having ruined themselves by their criticism (R 120)."

Thus, the absence of self-existence destroys one who comprehends it to mean the nonexistence of

entities. But one may erroneously conceive emptiness itself to be an existent entity and imagines it to be the substance of everyday entities. If so, then confusion would break out on the path leading to nirvana in the very teaching of the doctrine of emptiness because of this mistake. This is why the absence of self-existence destroys one comprehending emptiness to be by nature an entity.

Objection : [497] If something useful is grasped badly, it does not provide any service at all, but how does it do harm? An improperly sown seed does not harm the farmer.

Reply : Nagarjuna gives an example here that clarifies his meaning: "just as does a snake incorrectly grasped or a spell incorrectly cast." A snake properly caught according to the prescriptions of herbs and spells produces a great treasure of riches because one obtains the price on its head and the snake catcher can thus make a living. But the snakedestroys the catcher if the prescriptions are put aside. Spells too, when cast according to the instructions, favor a magician, but they destroy him if they are cast when the instructions are lost. So too with our magical doctrine of emptiness: when it is realized in practice and fully comprehended according to the instructions, it leads to enlightenment. As the middle way between the extremes of "it is" and "it is not," it extinguishes the fire of suffering — birth, old age, death, and so forth — and baths those who comprehend in the bliss of the flowing ocean of the unconditioned nirvana without residue. [498] But for the reasons stated, emptiness will surely destroy one who conceives it contrary to the special instructions given here.

That is why emptiness destroys one who grasps it incorrectly and why those of weak intelligence are incapable of grasping it correctly.

[12] Thus, when the Buddha considered how difficult it would be for those of little intelligence to comprehend the doctrine, his mind turned away from teaching.

Thus, the doctrine of emptiness destroys one of weak intelligence and a small mind because they grasp it incorrectly. Since this is so, the blessed Buddha, after fully awakening to the supreme and perfect enlightenment and beholding the realms of all sentient beings and the profundity of the doctrine and realizing how difficult it would be for those of weak intelligence to fathom the doctrine, abstained at first from teaching the doctrine, although he was gifted with the special knowledge of the great means to do so. As it is stated in a discourse: "The Buddha in the moment he attained perfect enlightenment, thought: 'The doctrine that I have attained is profound, deep in its splendor, beyond reasoning and the domain of reasoning, subtle, and to be known only by the discernment of the wise and learned. Even if I were to reveal its radiance to others, they would not understand it. That would be fruitless, and it would be injurious to myself causing fatigue and a sinking heart. [499] Now I myself have achieved the joy ofperceiving the sweet doctrine and shall move to a remote forest alone, and so forth.'"

Emptiness Versus Self-Existence in the World

Thus, in this manner lacking discernment into the indisputable doctrine of the twofold truth:
[13] In addition, the error accompanying the objections to emptiness that you make is not ours — it is not applicable to what is empty.

Objection : This has a faulty consequence: if the entire world is empty of self-existence, there is no arising or ceasing-to-be, and so forth.
Reply: Such a refutation, cast against us because of a lack of insight into the twofold nature of truth and because of ignorance of the nature of emptiness and its meaning and its purpose, does not apply to our understanding of emptiness. Thus, it is not applicable. In alleging a refutation of emptiness, you charge, slander, attack, and reject emptiness, but your accusation does not apply to us. Your accusation is made by superimposing "nonexistence" onto the idea of "emptiness." But we do not maintain that the meaning of "nonexistence" is that of "emptiness." What is it then? It is "dependentarising." Thus, it is not acceptable to attack the very doctrine of "emptiness."
[500] Not only are these stated refutations not applicable to our position, but in addition the entire system of Buddhist doctrines becomes more intelligible (by accepting emptiness as it is properly understood). Thus, Nagarjuna explains:

[14] For whom emptiness is admissible, everything is admissible. For whom emptiness is inadmissible, everything is inadmissible.

All that is described here is admissible for the one to whom the emptiness of self-existence in all entities is admissible. For such a one everything in the way we have explained is admissible. Why? Because we explain "dependentarising" as "emptiness of self-existence." As stated in one text: "What arises from conditions is not arisen (since it is not real), and there is no arising from self-existence (since the real is eternal). Whatever depends on conditions is said to be empty of self-existence. Whoever comprehends emptiness is free of delusion." Also from the Perfection of Wisdom texts: "All basic phenomena of the experienced world are empty because they lack self-existence."

Thus, dependent-arising is admissible to one for whom emptiness is admissible, agreeable, and acceptable. In addition, the four noble truths are admissible to one for whom dependent-arising is admissible. Why? Because it is precisely what arises dependently that is suffering, not what does not arise dependently. What arises dependently also is empty because it is not self-existent. When there is suffering, then the arising of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the way to cessation of suffering are possible. Thus, a clear grasp of suffering, the elimination of its arising, the realization of its cessation, and the practice of the way are all possible.

[501] If there are the truths of suffering and thegrasping of them and so forth, then their spiritual fruit is possible. When the fruits are possible, recipients of the fruits are possible. When recipients are possible, aspirants are possible. When aspirants are possible, the community of monks and nuns is possible. When there are Buddhist truths, then there is the Buddhist doctrine. If the Buddhist doctrine and the community are possible, then buddhas are possible. Thus, there are the three "jewels" — the community, the doctrine, and the Buddha. All things whatsoever, whether of this realm or of the realms beyond that are realized by the Buddhist discipline, are then possible. Correct and incorrect conduct, their fruits, auspicious and inauspicious destinations, and all mundane practices are possible.

Thus it is that "Everything is admissible for one for whom emptiness is admissible." Thus, for such a one for whom the absence of self-existence in all entities is admissible everything in the world as we have described it above is admissible and can be effected. But the entire world is not admissible for one for whom emptiness as we have explained it is not admissible — because they do not understand

the dependent-arising of all entities. This is demonstrated in detail below.

Thus, our proposition is without flaw and is established without any contradictions. But your proposition is full of errors — it is exceedingly simplistic, very shortsighted, and contradicts others. You are too obtuse to find the merits and the faults [502]:

[15] In attributing your errors to us, you have forgotten the horse you yourself are mounted upon.

Just as one who forgets that he is mounted on a horse falsely accuses others of the crime of stealing the horse, so do you, although mounted on the horse of the position of emptiness understood as the dependent-arising of all entities, not perceive this because of your confusion, and so you revile us.

What are the opponent's flaws that he does not perceive and so reproaches the advocate of emptiness? In order to expound them, Nagarjuna states:

[16] If you perceive entities as having true being because of their selfexistence, then you will perceive entities as being without causes and conditions.

If you see entities as existent through their own self-existence, then you ignore their causes and conditions. You see entities, whether internal or external, as having no causes and conditions, as existing without causes and conditions, and as having no cause since what is self-existent is not dependent on causes and conditions. Also, by supposing the absence of causes [503]:

[17] You will also reject effect, cause, actor, the means of acting, action, arising, ceasing, and fruit.

Why? If you suppose here that a pot exists through its own self-existence, what need would this self-existent entity have for causes and conditions of clay and so forth? Thus, there would be no causes and conditions. And it is not acceptable that there is an effect named "a pot" when there is no cause. Without such causes as the potter's wheel, the potter as the maker, and the activity of making the pot are nonexistent, and also arising and ceasing-to-be are nonexistent. But if nothing arises or ceases, how can there be any spiritual fruits? Thus, by accepting that entities are self-existent, you discard all the effects in question and others besides, so that if you accept self-existence, all that occurs is impossible for you. On the other hand, for us who declare that all entities are empty of self-existence, all that occurs is possible. Why? Because:

[18] Whatever is dependently arisen, we call that "emptiness." This indicator, once comprehended, is in fact itself the "middle way."

This dependent-arising, which is manifest in such cases as seeds and consciousness that depend on causes and conditions, means that entities do not arise through self-existence. And the non-arising of entities through selfexistence is the emptiness of entities. [504] It is stated by the Buddha: "Whatever arises from conditions is not really arisen — it does not arise as selfexistent. Whatever depends on conditions is said to be empty of selfexistence. Whoever comprehends emptiness is free of delusion." And it is described in detail in the *Lankavatara Sutra*: "It is accepted that there is no arising through self-existence. It is my teaching that basic phenomena of the experienced world are empty," and so

forth. In the *Dyvadhashatika Sutra*, it is said: “All basic phenomena are empty because they have no self-existence.”

In addition, this emptiness of self-existence is a dependent designation. This “emptiness of self-existence” is established as a “dependent designation.” A “chariot” is designated as derived from the wheelsand its other parts. Thus, whatever is designated by its parts does not arise self-existently, and such non-arising through self-existence is emptiness. Indeed, this emptiness is indicated by non-arising through self-existence, and is known as the “middle way.” What does not arise self-existently surely does not have the definingcharacteristic of what exists. But since what does not arise through selfexistence does not cease to exist, it does not have the defining-characteristic of what does not exist either. Thus, because it is free from the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism, the emptiness of entities that is understood as the non-arising through self-existence of all entities without exception is designated “the middle way” or “the middle path.” Thus, “emptiness” as a dependent designation and “the middle way” are identifying terms for “dependent-arising.”

The Emptiness of Things

[505] Consider this in all its aspects:

[19] Any basic phenomenon of the experienced world that is not dependently arisen is not seen. Thus, a thing that is not empty is not seen.

Indeed, a basic phenomenon that does not arise through conditions is not found. As Aryadeva states in his *One Hundred Verses*: “There is no state of unconditionedness anywhere at any time in any respect. Thus, eternal existence is not found anywhere at any time in any respect. The naive think that non-compounded things such as space are eternal. The clear-sighted do not see existent objects in it corresponding to worldly conventions.” And the Buddha said: “The wise comprehend the basic phenomena as conditioned. They do not take refuge in the views of eternalism and annihilationism. They know the basic phenomena have causes and conditions and that it is not the nature of the basic phenomena to be without causes and conditions.” Thus it is said: “There is no basic phenomenon that does not arise dependently.”

Since what arises dependently is empty, there is no basic phenomenon that is not empty of self-existence. Thus, for us,all basic phenomena are empty, and the refutation alleged by our opponent is not applicable to us, but it is applicable to our opponent, the advocate of self-existence.

[20ab] If, as you say, everything were not empty, then there would be neither arising nor ceasing, . . .

And if there is not arising nor ceasing, then [506]:
[20cd] . . . and the nonexistence of the four noble truths follows.
Why? Because:

[21] How could suffering come to be if it is not dependently arisen? It is said that suffering is impermanent — indeed, it is not seen in what is self-existent.

Indeed, what is by nature self-existent is not arisen through conditions, and what is not arisen through conditions is not impermanent — a flower in the sky is unarisen and is not impermanent. But the Buddha has stated that what is impermanent is suffering: "Impermanence is suffering." And from Aryadeva's *One Hundred Verses*: "Suffering indeed arises from the impermanent, and there is no happiness in it. Thus, the impermanent is know as 'suffering.'"

If entities are by nature self-existent or arise through self-existence, there is no impermanence. Thus, supposing there are self-existent entities, suffering is not admitted. Not only is suffering not admitted: if entities are by nature self-existent, the arising of suffering also cannot be admitted. As Nagarjuna explains:

[22] In addition, if something exists by self-existence, how could it come to be? For one who rejects emptiness, there can be no "comingto-be."

[507] If suffering does arise and thus there is suffering, then it is said "There is a cause of suffering." Thus, if one rejects the emptiness of suffering and accepts it to be self-existent, the idea of a cause of suffering is not admitted, since there would be no purpose in it arising again. Thus, an arising of suffering is not admitted for you who rejects emptiness.

So too, the ceasing of suffering is not possible for one who accepts that suffering is self-existent. Nagarjuna explains:

[23] Thus, there can be no cessation of suffering that exists though self-existence. You deny cessation by being obsessed with selfexistence.

If suffering in fact exists by self-existence, how can it cease since the selfexistent is indestructible? Thus, because of your obsession with selfexistence, having seized the idea and being attached to it, you reject the cessation of suffering.

So too, the Buddhist path is also inadmissible for the advocate of selfexistence. Nagarjuna explains with these words:

[24] If the path were self-existent, the cultivation of the path could not occur. But since the path is in fact cultivated, self-existence is not seen in it.

[508] If entities have self-existence, then the Buddhist path is also selfexistent. But then the path cannot be followed through meditative development (because development involves change and the self-existent does not change). What then is the purpose of meditative development? Thus, as Nagarjuna says, "the cultivation of the path could not occur."

But if it is admitted that a path is to be followed, then indeed the Buddhist path cannot by nature be self-existent. Then the path has the nature of being an effect of causes and conditions. In addition, meditative development on the path is commended for the purpose of realizing the cessation of suffering and eliminating its cause. But the above argument establishes that for you, the advocate of self-existent entities:

[25] If no suffering, arising, and ceasing are seen, what path for the cessation of suffering could there be?

For the advocate of self-existence, there is no cessation at all of suffering by completing a path that is self-existent (since nothing real can change). Thus, the Buddhist path in this way is not possible. Thus, from the advocacy of selfexistent entities, there are no four noble truths.

Emptiness and Enlightenment

Nagarjuna now explains how for the opponent there can be no clear understanding of suffering, no ending of its cause, no meditative development, and no final realization of the Buddhist truths.

[26] If non-understanding exists by self-existence, how will understanding ever arise? Is not self-existence fixed?

[509] If at first there is a self-existent non-understanding of suffering, then perfect understanding cannot arise later. Why? Because it is said that the selfexistent is unchanging. Indeed, in the world what is self-existent is immutable — it never undergoes any change, as with the heat (as the self-existent nature) of fire. Since there is no change in what is self-existent, there can be no understanding of suffering when there already is a self-existent misunder- standing first.

Thus, there can be no perfect understanding of suffering either. When there is no perfect understanding of suffering, then:

[27] Like understanding, elimination, realization, and meditative development are not possible if you accept self-existence, nor are their four noble fruits.

"Elimination and realization" mean both the elimination of the cause of suffering and the final realization of its cessation. "Meditative development" is the following of the Buddhist path. Thus, these are not possible for you since there is no perfect understanding of suffering. There can be no elimination of a cause that is indestructible because of its self-existence. The same applies to "realization" and "meditative development."

In addition, not only is there no perfect understanding and so forth because of the view of self-existence, but, like perfect understanding, there are no four fruits (discussed above). Just as there is no perfect understanding of a suffering that is not already perfectly understood since it is self-existent, so too there can be no later attainment of "stream-entering," as it did not already exist earlier (since there is no arising of what is self-existent). That there is no "once-returning," "non-returning," and "attainment in this life" should be recognized in the same way as with "stream-entering." And it is not only that these fruits are not possible, like perfect understanding, but attaining these fruits is also not possible. Nagarjuna explains [510]:

[28] For one who accepts self-existence, how is it possible to obtain a fruit that is not already obtained through its self-existence?

For those who hold the view of the self-existence of entities, there can be no later realization of entities that by their nature were earlier unrealized, since self-existence is by its nature indestructible.

[29] In the absence of the fruits, there are none who have attained the fruits, nor any who have entered the way to attaining them. If these eight types of people do not exist, there is no community of monks and nuns. [30] Because of the nonexistence of the four noble truths, the true doctrine also is not seen. And if there is no doctrine or religious community, how could a buddha arise?

The meaning of these two verses is to be understood as before. In addition, once self-existence is accepted:

[31] It also follows for you that an enlightened one is not dependent upon enlightenment. It also follows for you that enlightenment is not dependent upon the enlightened.

[511] If there were a self-existent entity at all named "the enlightened," then it is without dependence on, or relation to, the omniscient awareness of enlightenment in any way. For it is said: "The self-existent is not made and is independent of everything but itself." In this way, there would be enlightenment without there being the enlightened. There would be enlightenment without resort to anything because it is self-existent.

In addition:
[32] One who by his self-existent nature is unenlightened would not attain enlightenment even while striving toward enlightenment by leading the way of life of a bodhisattva.

Because "being enlightened" is self-existent, there can be no enlightenment for one who is unenlightened by his self-existent nature, even though there is the career of a bodhisattva and he strives for enlightenment in that career. This is so because an unenlightened self-existent nature cannot cease.

Moreover:

[33] And no one will ever perform correct or incorrect actions — what can be done to what is not empty since what is self-existent cannot be affected by action?

Indeed, when the view of self-existence is accepted, it is not possible to perform correct and incorrect actions. What can be accomplished in a nonempty, self-existent world? For one cannot bring about anything that is not without self-existence in nature since the non-empty already exists.

In addition [512]:

[34] Indeed, for you karmic fruit is found without any correct or incorrect action. Conversely, the fruit of correct and incorrect actions is not found.

If a desirable or undesirable karmic fruit caused by correct or incorrect action is self-existent, then the fruit exists without correct or incorrect action. When for you there is karmic fruit without correct or incorrect action, then for you there is no karmic fruit arising from correct or incorrect action. Thus,

there cannot be any accumulation of wholesome or unwholesome merit. Thus, it is said: "for you karmic fruit is found without any correct or incorrect action."

But if it is imagined that there is fruit caused by (real) correct or incorrect action, then this fruit is not empty of self-existence. As Nagarjuna explains:

[35] Or, if for you there is the fruit of correct and incorrect actions, how can this fruit be non-empty since it has arisen from correct and incorrect actions?

This means that the karmic fruit is in fact empty of self-existence because it is produced through conditions, like a reflection is. In addition, all mundane practices such as going, doing, cooking, reading, or standing arise dependently. If you regard these as self-existent, then the dependent-arising of entities is rejected by you. From this rejection, all mundane practices are also rejected. Thus, Nagarjuna explains [513]:

[36] You reject all mundane conventions since you reject the emptiness of "dependent-arising." [37] For one who rejects emptiness, there would be nothing whatsoever that could be done; there would be uninitiated actions; there would be an actor with no action.

If entities are not at all empty of an inherent nature, they are self-existent. If that is so, nothing can be accomplished by anyone in any way concerning the self-existent because it already exists, just as the openness of space is not made by anyone. There would be "an action" without being acted, and there would be "an actor" who does not bring about an action. But this is not the way things are — thus, entities are not non-empty of self-existence.

Moreover:

[38] The world would then be unarisen, unceasing, and immutable since it would be devoid of varying conditions in its self-existent state.

[514] If entities exist self-existently, then the totality of the world would be unarisen and unceasing since the self-existent is uncreated and imperishable. Since what is self-existent is uncreated and unchanging, all entities would be unchanging. For the advocates of non-emptiness, all entities do not arise dependently, since they are independent of causes and conditions, and they do not vary in their state.

In the *Pitaputrasamagama Sutra*, it is said: "If anything were non-empty, the Buddha would not have spoken of emptiness. For it is certain that what exists is immutable and unvarying in its nature and neither grows nor diminishes." And in the *Hastikakshya Sutra*, it is said: "If any basic phenomenon of the experienced world were self-existent at all, the Buddha, along with his disciples, would assuredly know. There would be no cessation of an immutable basic phenomenon, and the Buddha would never stop making distinctions (between real entities)."

[515] When the view of self-existence is accepted, it is not only mundane practices that fall but also ethical and religious striving. Nagarjuna explains:

[39] If the world is not empty, there is no attaining what has not already been attained — the act of ending suffering and eliminating of the afflictions would not be found.

If all in the world is not empty and thus self-existent, then what is not yet attained surely cannot be attained later, and thus no karmic fruit that is as yet unattained can ever be attained. Any action to end suffering that did not exist previously cannot exist now. And the elimination of mental afflictions that do not as yet exist cannot exist later. Thus, all the world becomes impossible when the view of self-existence is accepted. Thus:

[40] But whoever sees dependent-arising sees this and also sees suffering, its arising, its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation.

Indeed, one who sees with complete clarity the lack of self-existence as the characteristic of the dependent-arising of all basic elements of the experienced world sees the four Buddhist noble truths as they really are. [516] As it is said in the Perfection of Wisdom texts: "Suffering is perfectly known by one who sees the non-arising of all the basic phenomena of the experienced world. The cause of suffering is eliminated by one who sees the non-selfexistence of all basic phenomena of the experienced world. The cessation of suffering is realized by one who sees that all basic phenomena are in a state of complete annihilation and without any restrictions. The way of meditative development is followed by one who sees that the basic phenomena are without self-existence," and so forth.

(Chandrakirti then quotes the *Dhyayitamushti Sutra* to the effect that sentient beings are trapped in the cycle of rebirths because the idea of a substantive self leads to the defilements that keep them being reborn and that this is ended by no longer discriminating the basic phenomena, which are unarisen, as self-existent, distinct entities. This leads to seeing the four noble truths are they really are. The quotation concludes:) "[517] Suffering is known perfectly by one who sees that all the basic phenomena are unarisen. The cause of suffering is eliminated for one who sees that all basic phenomena are unarisen. The cessation of suffering is realized by one who sees that all basic phenomena are in a state of complete annihilation and are without any restrictions. The way of meditative development is followed by one who sees that the basic phenomena are empty without any restrictions. One who sees the four noble truths in this manner does not have the idea 'These basic phenomena are wholesome while those basic phenomena are not. These basic phenomena are to be eliminated, while those are to be realized. Suffering is to be known perfectly, the cause is to be eliminated, the cessation is to be realized, and the way of meditative development is to be carried out.' Why? Because such a one does not recognize or conceive any basic phenomena as a self-existent entity, and so forth. The naive, who discriminate basic phenomena as self-existent entities, become disturbed, angry, and confused. But the wise neither accepts nor rejects any basic phenomena. As such a one neither accepts nor rejects any basic phenomena in this manner, his mind is not disturbed by the three realms of existence. He understands that all of the three realms are unarisen and are comparable to a phantom, a dream, and an echo. [518] Seeing that the nature of all the basicphenomena is like that, he is detached of attraction and repulsion toward all sentient beings. Why? Because he does not conceive the basic phenomena and so forth that he would be attracted to or repulsed by as real. With a mind like clear space, he does not see the Buddha, the Buddhist doctrine, or the community of monks and nuns as real. As he realizes that all basic phenomena are empty of selfexistence, he has no doubts

about any such phenomenon. Having no doubts, he is free from grasping. Not having any grasping, he is liberated, attaining the nirvana without residue."

Chapter 25: Nirvana
The Hinayana View of Nirvana

[519] Some object:

Objection *: [1] If all this is empty, then there is neither the arising nor the ceasing of things. So, by the removal or cessation of what is nirvana sought?*

The Buddha has taught that persons who live a chaste life and practice the discipline leading to perfect realization and have acquired a knowledge of the nature of the basic phenomena of the experienced world can attain a twofold nirvana: the nirvana in this life with a residual base and the nirvana after death without any residual base.

In the first case, "nirvana with a residual base" is attained with the complete destruction of the mental afflictions — i.e., root-ignorance, desire, and so forth. What is called "the base" is grounded in adherence to the concept of a "self." Thus, the word "base" refers to the aggregates that give rise to the concept of a "self." The "base" is the residue of past karmic actions. Only a base with residue is a "residual base." "Nirvana with a residual base" means the state of nirvana in which one continues to exist connected to the residual base. What sort of thing is this type of nirvana? It consists of nothing but the bare bodily aggregates freed from the delusional afflictions such as the belief in a substantive "self" — it is like town in which all criminal gangs have been purged. This is "nirvana with a residual base."

[520] In the second case, "nirvana without a residual base" is the nirvana in which even the purified bare bodily aggregates are absent. The idea of a "base" is absent. With the residual base destroyed, itis like a town in which all criminal gangs have been purged and the town itself has been annihilated. About this nirvana, it has been said: "The body hascollapsed. Perceptions are gone. Sensations and mental dispositions are pacified. Cognition itself is nonexistent." And: "Through the body, even though one does not cling to it, one still has some sensations. But in nirvana cognition has ceases, just as a light that has gone out." Such "nirvana without aresidual base" is attained by the cessation of the bodily aggregates.

The Madhyamaka Position

Objection : How can this twofold nirvana be made understandable? Nirvana is possible only when both the mental afflictions and the bodily aggregates have ceased. But if everything is empty of self-existence, nothing whatsoever can either arise or cease — so how can mental afflictions and bodily aggregates arise, the ceasing of which is nirvana? Thus, it is found that entities must be self-existent.

[521] *Reply*: If we suppose that entities are self-existent, then:

Reply *: [2] If everything is not empty, then there is neither the arising nor the ceasing of things. So, by the removal or cessation of what is nirvana sought?*

In order to attain nirvana, there must be a cessation of mental afflictions and bodily aggregates, but since self-existence cannot disappear, if mental afflictions and bodily aggregates are self-existent, how can they ever cease? Thus, for the proponents of the self-existence of things, nirvana is not possible. But the proponents of the absence of things' self-existence do not admit nirvana is characterized as the cessation of (self-existent) mental afflictions and bodily aggregates, and thus they are not guilty of this flaw, and this does not constitute an accusation against them.

Objection : But if proponents of the absence of self-existence do not accept nirvana as the cessation of mental afflictions and bodily aggregates, how do they conceive the nature of nirvana?

Reply: Nagarjuna says:
[3] Unrelinquished, unattained, unannihilated, non-eternal, unarisen, and unceased — this describes nirvana.

Nirvana is not something that can be extinguished like desire, nor something that can be gained through action like a karmic reward. Nor is it something that ends like the bodily aggregates and so forth, nor is it something everlasting like something not empty of self-existence. Nirvana is said to be something that by its self-nature neither arises nor ceases. It is the stilling all conceptual projection.

Objection : Now if nirvana is free of conceptual projection, what then of the concept of "mental afflictions" whose cessation is supposed to constitute nirvana with residue? [522] What too of the conceptof "bodily aggregates" whose cessation is supposed to constitute nirvana without residue?

Reply : So long as these conceptualizations remain, nirvana is not attained. Nirvana is only attained through the dissipation of conceptual projection.

Objection : If that is so, then there are no mental afflictions or bodily aggregates in nirvana — but then they did exist prior to attaining nirvana, and it is from their dissipation that there is nirvana.

Reply : Let go of the conception you grasp! Entities that are self-existent prior to nirvana cannot later become nonexistent. For this reason, this conception must be abandoned by those seeking to attain nirvana. Indeed, Nagarjuna will state this later: "The full extent of nirvana is the full extent of cyclical existence. There is not slightest interval between them (MK 25.20)." Thus, it should be realized that in the state of nirvana there is no extinction of anything whatsoever, nor any cessation of anything whatsoever (since nothing real — i.e., self-existent — ever really existed to begin with). Nirvana consists of the complete dissipation of conceptualizations (of real entities).

This has been stated by the Buddha himself: "There is no annihilation of the basic phenomena of the experienced world, and basic phenomena that do not exist now never existed. If one projects conceptualizations, thinking 'This is self-existent' and 'This is not self-existent,' if one courses so, rebirth will never come to rest." The meaning of this verse is this: In the perfected state of nirvana without a residual base, there are no basic phenomena of the experienced world since all of them — whether they are afflictions, actions, an individual being, or the bodily aggregates — have totally

vanished. Proponents of all Buddhist schools accept this.

[523] Now those basic phenomena that do not exist in the perfected state do not exist at all (since if they were real they would exist forever). They are like the fear caused by mistaking a rope in the dark to be a snake that vanishes in the light — they do not exist. Nor do the basic phenomena of the experienced world — whether they are afflictions, actions, an individual being, or the bodily aggregates — have no true reality at any time whatsoever in the realm of rebirth. Indeed, the rope in the darkness is not by its nature a snake since no snake in reality is perceived by sight and touch either in the darkness or in the light.

Objection : How then can there be an everyday world of rebirths? *Reply*: Entities that do not really exist indeed appear to do so to the naive people in the world who are in the grip of illusory notions of "I" and "mine," just as nonexisting hair, flies, and so forth appear to those with an eye-defect. Thus, the Buddha stated: "If one projects conceptualizations, thinking 'This is self-existent' and 'This is not self-existent,' if one courses so, the realm of suffering will never come to rest."
Those who advocate self-existence — the idea that true reality is found in individual entities — are the followers of Jaimini, Kanada, Kapila, and others up to the Buddhist Vaibhashikas. Those who advocate nonexistence are the materialists who are rooted in the path leading to calamitous rebirths. There are others (the Buddhist Sautranikas) who deny that the past and the future exist, and dispositions related to thought and form, but who admit there are other phenomena. And there are others (the Yogacharas) who deny the existence of individual external entities as only constructions of thought, but who admit such entities' contingent reality and also admit a true reality. For those affirming either self-existence or nonexistence, the realm of suffering and the cycle of rebirths will never come to rest.
[524] Indeed, there is this verse: "A man, who suspects he has taken poison, faints even when there is no poison in his stomach. Swayed by the care of 'I' and 'mine,' one eternally comes and goes (i.e., dies and is reborn) without real knowledge of the (true nature of the) 'self.'" Thus, it is understood that in nirvana there is no cessation or extinction of anything whatsoever — nirvana is nothing but the ending of all conceptualizations. According to Nagarjuna's *Ratnavali*: "Nirvana is not in fact the absence of an entity — how then could that be demonstrated? Nirvana is said to be the destruction of the notion of entities and the absence of entities (R 42)."
To those who are not able to understand that nirvana is the attainment of ending all conceptualization and falsely imagine nirvana to be something that exists, or does not exist, or both, or neither, the following verses are directed:

Nirvana is Not an Entity

[4] To begin with, nirvana is not an entity. If it were, it would be characterized by aging and death, for indeed there is no entity without aging and death.

[525] In this matter, there are indeed some who are committed to the idea that nirvana is an existent entity. Their argument is as follows.

Objection : There is something real (in nirvana) that by its nature is cessation. It is the definite termination to a continuum of a personal existence that arose from karmic actions based on mental

afflictions. It is like a dam stopping a stream of water. This termination is nirvana. Basic phenomena of the experienced world that are withoutself-existence are never observed to be a potent agent in this way.

Sautrantika objection : But there is total dispassion — the ending of the desires associated with a joyous worldly life — and this cessation is called "nirvana." What is a mere termination is not capable of being an entity. It has been rightly declared: "In nirvana, cognition itself is gone, just as a light has gone out." It is not admissible to regard the extinction of a light as an "entity."

Vaibhashika objection : It should not be thought that "termination of desire" means "an extinct desire." Rather, the end ofdesire occurs in something called "nirvana" that is a really existing basic phenomenon of the experienced world. It is this that is the proper termination of desire. (That is, there is no entity "desire" and so no absence of that entity.) The extinction of the light is a mere simile, and this simile must still be understood to mean that the release from cognitions takes place in something that is real.

Madhyamaka reply : Nagarjuna now examines the view that determines that nirvana is an entity. He finds that nirvana is not an entity. Why? Because if it were, it would follow that it would be subject to aging and death, since "aging" and "death" are the inevitable characteristics of an entity. He means that this would not then be nirvana since it would then be subject to aging and death, like cognition and the other bodily aggregates.

To explain further the inapplicability of the qualities of aging and death, Nagarjuna says: "There is no entity without aging and death." Indeed, anything that is without aging and death is not an entity at all. It is like a flower in the sky: it never ages or dies (since it does not exist).

In addition [526]:
[5] If nirvana were an entity, nirvana would be compounded, for an uncompounded entity is not seen anywhere.

If nirvana were an entity, it would be compounded, just like cognition and the other bodily aggregates, because these are entities. Whatever is not compounded, like the horns of a donkey, is not an entity (because it does not exist). Formulating the contrary proposition, Nagarjuna states: "An uncompounded entity is not seen anywhere." The word "anywhere" refers to any place or time or its use in a philosophical argument. The expression "an uncompounded entity" refers to the thing located, whether it is external or mental. This is his meaning.

In addition:
[6] If nirvana were an entity, how could it be non-dependent? A nondependent entity is not seen anywhere.

If, as you think, nirvana were an entity, then it would be dependent, i.e., it would be based in the totality of its own causes (and conditions). But such a dependent nirvana is not accepted by anyone — rather, nirvana is considered to be without any dependence. Thus, if nirvana were an entity, how could it be without any dependence? Indeed, nirvana could not be without any dependence because it is an entity, just as cognition and the other bodily aggregates cannot be non-dependent. Nagarjuna

added a further reason for the contrary proposition: “A non-dependent entity is not seen anywhere.”

Nirvana is Not the Absence of an Entity

Sautrantika objection : [527] If nirvana indeed is not an entity because of the fault exposed by the reductio ad absurdum argument, then nirvana must be the absence of an entity since it is merely the end of the individual being who arises from mental afflictions.

Reply: That too is inadmissible:

[7] If nirvana were not an entity, how could it become the absence of an entity? Where nirvana is not an entity, no absence of an entity is seen.

If nirvana is not accepted as an entity — i.e., if the claim “Nirvana is an entity” is rejected — then does nirvana become the absence of an entity? Nagarjuna’s meaning is that nirvana cannot be the absence of an entity.

If nirvana is the absence of mental afflictions and the individual being born of them, then nirvana is merely the ceasing of these afflictions and the individual being. Indeed, the cessation of these defilements and individual being has nothing but the characteristic of “ceasing” — thus, nirvana would be nothing but ceasing. But this cannot be admitted, since in that case liberation would be attained without effort. That is quite inadmissible.

In addition:
[8] And if nirvana were a non-entity, how can it be non-dependent? No non-dependent absence of an entity that could be nirvana is seen.

Here “the absence of an entity,” like “ceasing,” conveys meaning only by its dependence on an entity, since such things as a nonexistent donkey’s horn are not perceived as ceasing. [528] What has a characteristic has meaning only in dependence on its defining-characteristic, and defining-characteristics have meaning only in dependence on what they characterize. Thus, defining-characteristics and what is characterized are mutually dependent. How could there be ceasing without an entity characterized by it? Thus, “the absence of an entity” too conveys meaning only in dependence on “an entity.” This being so, if nirvana is the absence of an entity, in that case how could it be without any dependence? Nirvana would indeed be dependent if it is the absence of an entity, just as in the case of cessation. To make the point clearly, Nagarjuna states: “No non-dependent absence of an entity that could be nirvana is seen.”

Objection : But if the absence of an entity is not without any dependence, then mustn’t “the absence of the son of a barren woman” be dependent on a real son of a barren woman?

Reply : Who has established that such things as the “son of a barren woman” are the absence of an entity? It was stated above: “If something is not established as an entity, its absence cannot be established. What people call ‘the absence of an entity’ is nothing but a change in an entity (Pr 158).”

Thus, the “son of a barren woman” is not the absence of an entity. Indeed, it has been declared: “Empty space, the horns of rabbits, and sons of barren women are all spoken of as the absence of entities, as illusions concerning existing entities.” Here too it is to be understood that these are nothing but imagined contradictions of entities — they are not conceptions of the absence of entities since nothing real corresponds to them. The phrase “son of a barren woman” is nothing but words. The object of this phrase is never perceived as something that could be either an entity or its absence. How can one think in terms of “an entity” or “the absence of an entity” for something that by its own nature cannot be experienced? (That is, there is nothing real in the absence of an entity to experience.)

Thus, the “son of a barren woman” must not be thought of as an entity. And it has also been established that there is no absence of an entity that exists without dependence on an entity.

Summary of Last Sections

Objection : If nirvana is neither an entity nor the absence of an entity, then what is it?
Reply: The reply of the noble ones is this [529]:

[9] An entity that comes and goes is conditioned and dependent. What is without conditions and is non-dependent is taught to be nirvana.

Here “comes and goes” means either arising and ceasing in general or the cycle of birth and death. The cycle of being born and dying can be understood as dependent on a complex of causes and conditions, as “long” and “short” are. Or it can be under as entities that are dependent on something external, as light from a lamp or a sprout from a seed are. In either case, whether the process is understood as dependent on something external or as arising from causes and conditions, it is the ceasing of this continuous cycle of births and deaths, due to (the error) of taking them to be uncaused and non-dependent, that is called “nirvana.” But what is nothing but a ceasing-to-be cannot be conceived as either an entity or the absence of an entity. Thus, nirvana is neither an entity nor the absence of one.

Vaibhashika objection : Mental dispositions continue through successive lives. Arising and cessation are rigidly dependent on causes, and the absence of any mental dispositions as the cause is nirvana.

Pudgalavada objection : It is the “person” that persists through successive lives. The “person” is indefinable as either “impermanent” or “permanent.” [530] This “being born” and “dying” is based on the person as a changing substratum. In the moment the person no longer continues, it is no longer dependent, and that is called “nirvana.”

Reply : Since the mere ceasing-to-continue of either the person or the mental dispositions cannot be conceived of as either an “entity” or “the absence of an entity,” it then is unacceptable to conceive of nirvana as an entity or the absence of an entity.

In addition:

[10] The Buddha has spoken of relinquishing both becoming and ceasing. Thus, it is admissible to

say that nirvana is neither an entity nor an absence.

On this point, the *Udana* says: “All those who long for liberation from this personal existence into something that either ‘exists’ or ‘does not exist’ lack perfect insight. Both a longing for an eternal life and for mere nonexistence must be renounced.” But it is not nirvana that the Buddha urged should be rejected — on the contrary, it is not to be rejected. If nirvana were either eternal life or annihilation, it too would be rejected. Thus, Nagarjuna states: “Thus, it is admissible to say that nirvana is neither an entity nor an absence.”

Nirvana is Both an Entity and the Absence of an Entity

Vaibhashika objection : Nirvana is of a double nature. It is the absence of an entity since an individual being and the mental defilements are not present in nirvana. But nirvana is itself an entity by its nature. Thus, nirvana is both an entity and the absence of (another) entity.

Reply: This is inadmissible. In response, Nagarjuna states [531]:

[11] If nirvana were both an entity and the absence of an entity, then liberation would be both an entity and the absence of an entity, and this is not admissible.

If nirvana were of the nature of both an entity and the absence of an entity, liberation would be both an entity and the absence of an entity. Thus, the reality of dispositions in an individual and their extinction together constitute liberation. But it cannot be accepted that liberation and the dispositions can exist together. Thus, Nagarjuna states: “This is not admissible.”

In addition:

[12] If nirvana were both an entity and the absence of an entity, nirvana would not be non-dependent for it would dependent upon both of these.

If nirvana were both an entity and the absence of an entity, then it would be dependent on a complex of causes and conditions — i.e., it would not be nondependent. Why? Because both an entity and the absence of an entity are dependent. If it is agreed that the absence of an entity is dependent on an entity and an entity is dependent on the absence of an entity for its meaning, then both the entity and the absence are obviously dependent and not nondependent. This is so if nirvana were in nature both an entity and the absence of an entity, but this is not the case and is not admissible.

In addition:

[13] How could nirvana be both an entity and the absence of an entity? Nirvana is uncompounded, but what is an entity and the absence of an entity is compounded.

[532] An entity is compounded since it arises from the totality of its causes and conditions. The absence of an entity is compounded since it arises in dependence on an entity and since it has been declared in scripture that old age and death are dependent upon birth. Thus, if nirvana were in its true nature both an entity and the absence of an entity, then it would not be uncompounded but instead

would be compounded. And since it is not admitted that nirvana can be thought of as compounded, nirvana is not in its own nature both an entity and the absence of an entity.

Objection : Even if this is so, perhaps nirvana is the place where an entity and the absence of an entity can be found together.
Reply: This is not acceptable either. Why? Because:

[14] How could nirvana be both an entity and the absence of an entity? There can be no existence of these in one place, just as in the case of light and darkness.

Since an entity and the absence of an entity are mutually incompatible, they cannot possibly exist together in one place, i.e., in nirvana. Thus, the question: “How could nirvana be both an entity and the absence of an entity?” This question means it is absolutely impossible.

Nirvana is Not Both an Entity and the Absence of an Entity

How it could be that nirvana is “neither an entity nor the absence of an entity”? Nagarjuna expounds this next:

[15] If the proposition “Nirvana is both an entity and not an entity” were established, the proposition “Nirvana is neither an entity nor the absence of an entity” could be established.

[533] If there were such an entity (named “nirvana”), then by its negation there would be the conceptualization “Nirvana is not an entity.” If there were the absence of an entity, then by its negation nirvana would not be the absence of an entity. But when there is neither an entity nor the absence of an entity, there cannot be the negation of either. Thus, the claim “Nirvana is both an entity and the absence of an entity” clearly is not admissible. (And so its negation also cannot be established.)

In addition:

[16] If nirvana is neither an entity nor the absence of an entity, by what means is it asserted that it is “neither an entity nor the absence of an entity”?

If it is imagined that there is this nirvana that has the nature “neither an entity nor the absence of an entity,” what shows this? Who perceives this? Who proclaims the doctrine that nirvana has “ being neither an entity nor the absence of an entity” as its nature? In this case, is there a knower of such a nirvana or not? If there is no one here, is there perhaps someone in nirvana that can realize it, or is there not? If there is, then a self would indeed exist in nirvana. But this is not admitted because of the absence of the existence of a self apart from the arisen bodily substratum (i.e., the aggregates). But if there is no one in nirvana, by whom will it then be determined that nirvana really is of this nature? If it is answered that one still within the realm of rebirth determines this, then does he do so by either everyday cognition or knowledge of reality as it truly is? If you suppose that he does this by everyday cognition, this is unacceptable. Why? Because cognition has its object the mark of an object (i.e., marks indicating defining-characteristics and thus providing support for conceptions), but in nirvana there are no object-marks at all. Thus, nirvana cannot be apprehended through cognition. Nor can

nirvana be known by knowledge of reality as it truly is. Why? Because “knowledge of reality as it truly is” only has the emptiness of entities as its object. (Thus, there is no entity called “nirvana” to apprehend.) And it is precisely the nature of such knowledge that it never arises. How then can such knowledge, whose own nature is nonexistent, grasp that nirvana is “neither an entity nor the absence of an entity”? [534] Indeed, the nature of knowledge of reality as it truly is beyond all conceptual projection.

Thus, nothing shows that nirvana is “neither an entity nor the absence of an entity.” And so it is not permissible to claim that what is unseen, unrevealed, and unperceived exists in these terms.

Conclusion

Just as the four conceptualizations that nirvana is an entity, the absence of an entity, both, or neither are not possible, so too these conceptualizations are not possible when applied to the Buddha, who has attained nirvana:

[17] It is not to be inferred that the blessed one exists after ceasing (i.e., after the Buddha’s death after he attained enlightenment), nor that he does not exist, nor both, nor neither.

As was stated earlier: “One who holds the crude notion that the Buddha exists in this life must be convinced that after enlightenment he does not exist (Pr 203).” In this regard, one cannot imagine what happens after the cessation of the Buddha — does he exist or does he not? Since each of these alternatives is unimaginable alone, one cannot imagine that both hold, and because one cannot imagine both holding, one cannot imagine that neither holds.

It is not only concerning the Buddha after his death that one cannot imagine in the fourfold manner, but in addition:
[18] It is not to be inferred even that a currently living blessed one exists, nor that he does not exist, nor both, nor neither.
[535] This is beyond our understanding and our conceptions. This was shown in Chapter 22 devoted to the Buddha. It is so for precisely this reason:

[19] There is not the slightest difference of cyclical existence from nirvana. There is not the slightest difference of nirvana from cyclical existence.

It is impossible to imagine a (truly existent) Buddha living in this realm nor to deny (that a conventional Buddha does exist here), and it is equally impossible to imagine a (truly existing or conventional) Buddha existing or not existing in the nirvana after death. And this being so, there is no difference at all between the everyday world of rebirth and nirvana: upon analysis, they reveal themselves to be of the same nature (i.e., empty of self-existence).

And by this reason, the words of the Buddha should be understood: “The world of rebirth, consisting of birth, decay, and death, has no limits (i.e., the concepts of arising and ceasing do not apply).” This is so because there is no difference between the world of rebirth and nirvana. Indeed:

[20] The full extent of nirvana is the full extent of cyclical existence. There is not slightest interval between them.

Since the world of rebirth is the same in nature as nirvana, it is impossible to imagine either its beginning or end. (That is, thecycle of rebirth is not a reality that comes to an end and then the reality of nirvana then begins. Both have the same nature: being free of self-existence.) But not only that [536]:

[21] The views "After cessation, there is an end" and the other three options, and "It is eternal" and the other three options, all depend on the ideas of "nirvana," a "past limit," and a "future limit."

None of these views can be held since the world of rebirth and nirvana are one in nature, i.e., by nature they are tranquil (i.e., free of multiple real entities).

The four views proceed based on the notion of "after he ceased" in this manner: "The Buddha exists after his death," "The Buddha does not exist after his death," "The Buddha both exists and does not exist after his death," and "The Buddha neither exists nor does not exist after his death." These four views are based on "ceasing" and "nirvana" being analogous.

And there are also these views regarding the end of the world: "The world has an end," "The world does not have an end," "The world both has an end and has no end," "The world neither has an end nor does it not have an end." These are based on the assumption that there is an entity "the end." The view that the world has an end arises from not knowing anything about a future life or future world. This view establishes an end to the world. Similarly, the view that the world has no end arises from the expectation of a future life. Those who both expect and do not expect a future life proclaim the dual view of both an end to the world and no end. Those who deny both proclaim the view that the world neither has nor does not have an end.

There likewise are four options regarding the beginning of the world: "The world is without a beginning," "The world has a beginning," "The world both has and does not have a beginning," and "The world neither has nor does not have a beginning." The first view is based on the belief that we ourselves or the world itself previously existed, and the second view is based on rejecting that belief. The third view is based on believing both that we ourselves or the world itself previously existed and that we did not, and the fourth view is based on rejecting both. These views are based on the idea of "a beginning."

[537] How are these views to be understood? If any of these things were self-existent in any respect, then we could understand conceptualizations about entities and the absence of entities. But we have established that there is no difference between the world of rebirth and nirvana. Thus:

[22] If all basic phenomena are empty, what is without a limit? What has a limit? What has both no limit and a limit? What has neither a limit nor no limit? [23] Indeed, what is the same? What is different? What is eternal? And what is not? What is both eternal and not? What is neither eternal nor not eternal?

It should be noted that these fourteen unanswered questions (i.e., these ten questions plus the four about a buddha after his final death) are not resolvable because the nature of entities is not real. But those who superimpose this idea of self-existence onto entities affirm or deny self-existence, and having fabricated these views they hold to them stubbornly. This hinders them on the path leading to the city of nirvana and binds them to the troubles of cyclic existence.

Objection : If this is so, nirvana is denied. To what purpose then did the Buddha propound a doctrine for attaining liberation by all sentient beings? The doctrine, which has antidotes to every walk of life, was formulated by the Buddha who, because of his infinite compassion, watches and cherishes all sentient beings of the three realms as one cherishes a beloved only child, and who unmistakably knows the intentions of all the living world as they truly are, and who follows the mass of sentient beings in all their wanderings.

Reply : [538] This would be so if there were any doctrine that by its own nature were self-existent, and if there were self-existent bearers of this doctrine, and if there were some self-existent being called "the Buddha." However:

[24] The stilling of all conceptual support and the stilling of the projection of concepts onto reality is peace — no doctrine was taught by the Buddha in any place to anyone.

How can the objection made above affect us? Here the meaning is that the very stilling of all conceptual projection and all support for the conceptualizations of all named entities is itself nirvana. This stilling, which by its nature is a peace, is the highest good. When all words cease, named entities are at peace. The ceasing of discursive knowledge is the highest good. That is, the stilling of conceptual projection by putting all mental afflictions to an end, thereby ending (the rebirth of) an individual being, is the highest good. The stilling of conceptual projection by abandoning all mental afflictions, and thus ridding oneself of unconscious mental habits without residue, is the highest good. Again, the stilling of conceptual projection — by all objects of discursive knowledge and even discursive knowledge itself dying away — is the highest good.

[539] When the illustrious buddhas are in nirvana, the highest good, which is the stilling of all conceptual projection, they are like royal swans soaring through the sky without any support. They soar through the sky or hover there on the twin wings of accumulated merit and knowledge of reality as it truly is. It should be known that from there,because they do not perceive any objects supported by signs, the buddhas teach no (real, selfexistent) doctrine whatsoever concerning afflictionsor purification in the divine or human worlds to any gods or human beings whatsoever.

As stated in the *Tathagataguhya Sutra*: "(The Buddha has never uttered a syllable, but) all sentient beings according to their religious development imagine the voice of the Buddha as it issues forth discourses in various dialects of various lands on different occasions. For them, they hear 'This revered one is teaching this doctrine for our benefit,' or 'We are hearing the doctrine of the Buddha.' But the Buddha never engages in conceptualizations or talk of real entities, since the Buddha is freed from unconscious habits, from all entanglements with conceptualizations, and from all mental discriminations of discrete entities." To quote again: "Inexpressible, beyond all language, are the basic phenomena of the experienced world, empty of self-existence, tranquil, pure. Those who know the basic phenomena as they really are are called 'buddhas' and 'bodhisattvas.'"

Objection : But if the Buddha has taught no doctrine at all to anyone whomsoever at any time, why is it that we hear of his various discourses that constitute the scriptures?

Reply : This arises only from the conceptualizations of people who are dreaming and are deep in the slumber of root-ignorance. According to them: "The Buddha, the lord of gods, demons, and human beings in all three realms, taught this doctrine for our sakes." And the Buddha said: "The Buddha's being is but a reflection of the pure, passionless truth — [540] he is not real in himself, nor is he perfected. He is beheld in all the realms as a being only as a reflection." This is explained in details in a treatise on the secret meaning of the Buddha's words.

Since there is no (real) doctrine about (real) basic phenomena for the purpose of attaining nirvana, how can it be maintained that nirvana exists based on a real doctrine existing? Thus, it is established that there even is no (real) nirvana. Accordingly, it was said by the Buddha: "The ruler of the world has taught that nirvana is no (real) nirvana. A knot tied by an empty space has been unraveled by that space itself!"

In addition: "An enlightened one cannot appear for those who believe that the basic phenomena of the experienced world can arise and can cease. There is no victory over the realm of rebirth for those who persist in seeking for a nirvana that a is real entity. Why? Nirvana is the cessation of all perceptions of marks of real entities, the quieting of all inner and outer activity. [541] Thus, they are deluded who, although having taken up the religious life of well-taught doctrine and discipline, have fallen into a false, non-Buddhist doctrine and persist in seeking nirvana as a real entity. They believe nirvana can be obtained as sesame oil is pressed from sesameseeds and butter is churned from milk. I declare that they are self-deluded nonbelievers who strain after nirvana as an eternal extinction of all the basic phenomena of the experienced world. A master of meditation, one who is fully realized, does not produce the coming-to-be or the ceasing-to-be of any basic phenomenon whatsoever, nor does he claim that some real basic phenomenon can be attained or grasped by clear understanding," and so forth.

* * *

Notes

[1.34] In Buddhist psychology, the physical eye does not see: the eye is a material object, and one material object cannot see another. Rather, the visual *faculty* (*indriya*) is an inner mental visual capacity that actually sees.

[1.40] The idea of texts of final meaning (*nitartha*) and those of provisional meaning (*neyartha*) has roots in the earlier Buddhist texts. It is the grounds for the later idea of "two types of truth." (See Jones 2010: 147-48.)

[1.44] "" *Prati-paksha*" is literally "counter-proposition," but it can also mean a more generally "corrective" or "remedy" or "cure."

[1.57] The word translated here as "contrary conviction (*a-nishayasambhava*) is simply the negative of the word for "conviction" (i.e., doubt). But the Madhyamaka idea behind this is that to deny a conviction is in fact *to affirm* a conviction in the *opposite* of a particular proposition — here, the anticonviction would be "There is no arising." Of course, one can have doubts only about a proposition that exists in some sense, but in the Madhyamaka epistemology to deny, reject, or negate a proposition is to affirm its opposite. Madhyamikas hold that one can only deny a proposition if a proposition exists to deny — i.e., by denying the proposition "Arising is real," one affirms there is that proposition. Thus, Madhyamikas neither affirm nor *deny* anything since this would implicitly affirm self-existent entities.

[1.64] For Chandrakirti, only if there are discrete, real entities can anything be expressed — i.e., only then can words truly reflect the makeup of reality. Thus, since there is no self-existence, from the ultimate point of view there are no discrete entities, and so nothing about reality as it truly is (*tattva*) is expressible. Therefore, the true ontic nature of reality is "inexpressible (*avachyata*)." So too, ultimate truths are inexpressible.

[1.75] Thus, Chandrakirti does not reject "valid means of knowledge" and "valid objects of knowledge" as conventional truths, but he does reject them as self-existent and thereby real.

[1.75] Note that Chandrakirti will use the conventional truths of the world to explain the Buddhist doctrine and how to attain nirvana, not the higher metaphysical truths of the ultimate ontic status of things.

[1.78] What arises dependently is not dependent upon anything *real*, and thus there is no real (self-existent) dependent-arising.

[1.79] "Causal energy (*kriya*)" is an alleged power or activity inherent in something (in additions to its conditions) that produces an effect.

[1.82] There are no real conditions because nothing real arises. What is real is eternal and so exists prior to conditions or any combining of conditions.

[1.86] "Continuity with previous states (*samanantara-pratyaya*)" means that two distinct things (cause and effect) must have immediate contact. For the Hinayana, all of reality is a chain of discrete arising and ceasing moments, and a cause must cease for the effect to arise. But then there is discontinuity and no contact of cause and effect.

[Chapter 15] Chandrakirti uses "*svabhava*" in different senses. (See the essay.)

[15.265] Chandrakirti denies self-nature since only what is real (self-existent) can have a real self-nature, but everything in fact is dependent on causes and conditions, and so from the ultimate point of view there are no self-natures.

[15.265-66] Chandrakirti treats verses 15.3-4 in terms of "self-nature" and "selfexistence" — the objection presented after verse 3 only makes sense if both concepts are involved. The claim seems to be that only what is real has a true self-nature, and what is real is either self-existent or produced by something that is self-existent (i.e., produced through "other-existence") — so without self-existence, there can be no self-nature; and conversely, if there is no true self-nature, then there is no self-existent entities.

[15.267] "Perfect" means "complete" or "thorough." Thus, perfected knowledge is the complete or thorough knowledge of a subject — there is nothing else to know about a subject.

[15.267] The first half of the last sentence may also be translated: "But selfnature of things as proclaimed by the perfectly realized ones is not contrary to the evidence. . . ." That is, if *svabhava* here means "self-existence," then the translation given above is appropriate; but if *svabhava* means "self-nature," then this translation is better. The location of the word "not (*na*)" suggests this reading, but the prior sentence suggests the reading given above.

[15.268] In Madhyamaka metaphysics, the extremes of "It exists" and "It does not exist" do not exhaust all ontological possibilities. These are the extremes of being eternal and being totally nonexistent — realities that are *dependently arisen* do not fall into either category. Thus, from the ultimate point of view, "is" and "exist" do not apply to anything dependently arisen.

[18.370] The idea of a "graduated (*anupurvi*)" teaching fits well with the Mahayana ideas of two types of truth and skillful means (*upaya*) in leading listeners to enlightenment.

[18.375] Rather than treating nirvana only as a state of a person, Chandrakirti ontologizes it into "reality as it truly is (*tattva*)." (See also MA 6.189).

[24.490] "Nonexistence (*na-asti, na-astitva*)" means literally "there is not." It is denying the reality of any entity (*bhava*) in the sense that any entity is selfexistent — i.e., no entity exists by its own power (*svabhava*) independently of other entities. Notice the connection of emptiness to countering "conceptual projection (*prapancha*)." (See Jones 2010: 169.)

[24.492] "Ignorance (*a-jnana*)" is not merely the lack of knowledge but an active error of seeing the world in the everyday way of consisting of independent, self-existent entities rather than as empty of self-existence.

[24.493] "Discursive knowledge (*jnana*)" is related to worldly discriminations and is related to cognition (*vijnana*). It is different from the wisdom (*prajna*) connected to seeing reality as it truly is (*tattva*), i.e., empty of self-existence. When Buddhists also use "*jnana*" to refer to the resulting knowledge, as for example in Pr 533, it is knowledge without mental discriminations (*nirvikalpa-*

jnana), i.e., conceptualized "entities." Chandrakirti argues that discursive knowledge and words cannot be valid from the point of view of what is truly real (*parama-artha-tas*) since reality as it truly is has no permanent distinctions. (He then proceeds to speak of the nature of reality as it truly is.)

[24.504] On "dependent designation (*prajnapti-upadayaprajnapti-upadaya* 89. Buddhapalita, not Nagarjuna, made it a major point.

[24.518] By seeing all phenomena as free of self-existence, one becomes evenminded and detached — neither attracted to, nor repulsed by, any phenomena. This may seem incompatible with the bodhisattva's compassion: if you take nothing more seriously than anything else, how can you care about others? But the even-mindedness of detachment permits bodhisattvas to implement the normative value they have chosen — concern for others' soteriological welfare — evenly and without any concern for personal repercussions. (See Jones 2004: 184-87.)

[25.521-22] On the importance of the concept of "conceptual projection (*prapancha*)" in the thought of Nagarjuna, see Jones 2010: 169. Conceptualizations (*kaplanas*) are connected to this: they are the actual imaginings of our mind resulting from the sense of discrete entities that we project onto what is actually real.
[25.533] Discursive or conceptualized cognition (*vijnana*) is part of the everyday world, versus meditative knowledge of reality as it truly is (*jnana*).

[25.536] On MK 25.19, see Jones 2010: 118-19, 142-43. Here the world of rebirths (*samsara*) and *nirvana* are said to have the same nature, but not that they are the identical realities — they share the *same nature* with everything else (being empty of any self-existence), but they are not *identical* any more than a brick and a tree are identical, although they too are empty of self-existence and so are the same in nature. Ontologically, everything is selfless, including nirvana, but this is not to say that everyone is already in a state of nirvana. Saying that *samsara* and nirvana are *not different* rather than the *same* is simply a direct consequence of Madhyamaka metaphysics: only entities that *exist by self-existence*are the type of thing that can be the *same or different*, and thus things empty of self-existence cannot be related that way. There simply are no real (self-existent), distinct entities to be different. Thus, *samsara* and nirvana are *not different*, but they also are *not the same thing* either. (See also BC 9.150. There was no need to point out that nirvana and samsara are *not the same* since that is known even conventionally.) The only way to express their ontic status is to say that they are both empty of selfexistence. There is no reason to point out that they are different since they obviously are different — indeed, it is their contrast on the conventional level that makes it worthwhile to Madhyamikas to mention that they are the same in nature.

[25.538-40] To Nagarjuna, the Buddha, his teaching, and his listeners are not real simply because they are empty of self-existence. That is, they are no more self-existent than anything else — they are empty, and thus not "real." Thus, ultimately, the Buddha spoke no "real" words — he was the "silent one." But Chandrakirti changes this and makes the Buddha and his discourses literally imaginary, only dreamed by the unenlightened. This has more in keeping with the Mahayanist doctrines of the "three bodies" of the Buddha.

[25.540] " Nirvana is the cessation of all *perceptions* of marks of real entities, the quieting of all

inner and outer activity." Note the importance of *perception*, *misperception*, *nonperception (of "entities"),* and *mistaken views* throughout the work. Whether something "exists" is a matter of whether it is "seen" or "found." Enlightenment is not a matter of *intellectual knowledge* but *seeing* things correctly as they really are and *interacting* with the world accordingly.

Shantideva

(fl. 700-750)

Shantideva lived after Chandrakirti, although their exact dates are not known. According to the legend, he was a prince named Achaleasena who as a child had a dream-vision of the bodhisattva Manjushri. He had another vision of him the night before his coronation in which Manjushri told him to find a spiritual teacher and he renounced the throne. The bodhisattva Tara led him to a cave where he met a yogin, who was in fact Manjushri. Like Chandrakirti, he ended up at the great monastic university in Nalanda, where he was known for his spiritual practice. There he acquired the name "*Shanti-deva* (lord of peace)" because of the high level of tranquility he attained. He is said to have finally renounced monkhood and lived as a naked ascetic.

Shantideva is not as original and strong a philosophical figure as Chandrakirti. His strength lies on the practical "religious" side, focusing on the "mind of awakening" and the bodhisattva's perfections, not on the philosophical analysis of points of Buddhist doctrine that made the bodhisattva's career possible. But Chapter 9 of his *Entering the Bodhisattva's Path* (*Bodhicarya-avatara*) covering "wisdom (*prajna*)," i.e., insight into the true ontological nature of things, has been included here. Chapter 8 is also included: it concerns the concentration (*dhyana*) of the mind connected to "calming" meditative practices (*shamatha*), but it also introduces some of the basic problems of applying the no-self doctrine to morality. (See Crosby & Skilton 1995: 75-76 on the difference between meditative concentration and the mindfulness type of meditation connected to wisdom [*prajna*].)

Entering the Bodhisattva's Path is, from a literary point of view, the best of the works translated in this series, but no attempt has been to capture the flavor in Sanskrit. The text has also grown over the years: the earliest known manuscripts have 600 verses, but the standard version today has 913. Chapter 9 may have ended with the dramatic declaration of verse 9.34.

Also included here are Shantideva's verses that introduce sections of his *Collection of the Teachings* (*Shiksha-sumucchaya*), the body of which consists of selections from other Mahayana texts. Even these verses are not particularly original since they contain some stock quotes (Clayton 2006: 38), but

they do give an overview of the text's teachings, which are mainly in the area of a bodhisattva's practice and discipline.

* * *

Entering the Bodhisattva's Path (Bodhicharaya-avatara)

Chapter 8: Meditative Concentration

[1] Having thus developed perseverance, one should focus one's mind in meditative concentration since those whose mind wanders are stuck in the grasp of the fangs of the mental afflictions. [2] Through the discernment of mind and body, one (gives up attachments and desires and) is not troubled by distractions. Thus, forsake the worldly life and discard distracting thoughts. [3] But because of an attachment to people and a desire for material gain, the worldly life is not forsaken. Thus, one should forsake these things, since this is the way that the wise reflect.

Renouncing the World

[4] Meditative insight coupled with meditative calming of the mind destroys the mental afflictions. Realizing this, one should seek to calm one's mind first. This is achieved through the genuine joy of renouncing the world. [5] For whom among transient beings is the desire of attachment appropriate? For one will not be able to see loved ones again for thousands of lives. [6] Not seeing them, one becomes unhappy and cannot focus one's mind in meditation. Even if one does see them, there is no satisfaction and, as before, one is tormented by longing. [7] One does not see things as they really are. The desire for liberation is struck down. Desiring the contact of loved ones, one is constantly consumed by grief. [8] By thinking only of them, this life ebbs away without purpose. For fleeting friends and relatives, the eternal Buddhist doctrine (leading to enlightenment) is destroyed.

[9] One who behaves like a child certainly falls into the lower realms (in future rebirths). Since associating with the childish leads thus, why keep company with the childish? [10] In one moment they are friends, and in the next they are enemies. They become angry even on happy occasions. Worldly people are difficult to please! [11] When anything is said for their benefit, they resent it. All they do turns me away from what is beneficial. If they are not listened to, they get angry and fall into the lower realms. [12] They are jealous of superiors, contend with equals, and are arrogant toward inferiors. They are conceited when praised, and they become enraged when criticized. What benefit could there be in such childish people? [13] So from association with the childish, what is untoward accrues, such as self-praise, faulting others, and talking about the joys of the cycle of rebirth. [14] In this way, association with the childish harms oneself. I should live apart in solitude, with my mind undisturbed. [15] One should flee far away from the childish. But when you encounter them, be courteous with the social amenities, but maintain the detachment of a noble one. [16] After taking only what is necessary for the practice of the Buddhist doctrine, like a bee taking nectar from flowers, I shall dwell unknown in all places, as if I had not been there before.

[17] "I have many possessions, I am honored by people, and many adore me" — one who thinks thus still fears death when confronted by it. [18] Wherever the mind, confused about happiness, becomes attached (to anything), a thousand-fold suffering will accrue to it. [19] Thus, the wise do not crave (such pleasures) because fear arises from desires. With this firmly fixed in the mind, these desires dissipate by theirown nature. [20] Many people have made fortunes and also acquired fame. But it is not known where they have gone (after death) with their wealth and renown.

[21] Some despise me, so why should I feel pleased when praised by others? Some praise me, so why should I feel displeasure when criticized? [22] Even the buddhas could not please all people with their various inclinations — why then even mention an ignorant person such as myself? So why bother about the world? [23] People scorn the poor and think little of the rich. How can there be any pleasure being among those who by their nature dwell in suffering? [24] The buddhas have taught that the childish are nobody's friend since happiness arises for the childish only with regard to their own interest. [25] Happiness born of self-interest alone is a happiness for the interests of the "self" alone, just as the distress over a the loss of material wealth is caused only by the loss of pleasure.

[26] Trees do not speak harsh words, nor are they pleased by efforts (of praise).When may I dwell with such pleasant companions? [27] When shall I, with complete detachment and never looking back, stay in empty temples or at the foot of trees or caves? [28] When shall I dwell, without attachments and following my own inclinations, in vast ownerless places that are in their natural state? [29] When shall I live free of fear and without the need to cover my body, having just a begging bowl as my wealth and clothes that no thief would have a need for?

[30] When shall I go to a cremation yard and realize my decaying body and the dry bones there are the same? [31] For this body of mine will turn so putrid in that way that not even jackals will approach near to it because of its stench. [32] Even the bits of bone that belong together in this single body will be scattered apart. Why will the bodies of those one holds dear not similarly be scattered? [33] Indeed, beings are born alone and die alone. None share their pain. Of what use then are beloved ones who merely make obstacles (to enlightenment)? [34] Like a wayfarer on the road taking temporary lodging along the way, one on the road of rebirths leaves the lodging of one birth for the next.

[35] One should renounce the world and retreat to the forest before the four pallbearers arrive for this body amid the laments of the worldly. [36] Befriending no one and reviling no one, without attachments and dwelling alone, one does not grieve at the time of death because he is already dead (to the world) while alive. [37] Nor can such a one's beloved ones cause him any grief through their laments. Nor can they distract him from his recollection of the Buddha and the doctrine.

[38] Thus, I should follow the solitary life, which is happy and free from strife and which leads to the auspicious and calms all disturbances. [39] Freed from all thoughts of other things and with my mind focused one-pointedly, I shall endeavor to tame and to increase the meditative concentration of my mind. [40] Indeed, desires produce all misfortune in this world and the next — in this life, imprisonment, torture and murder; in the next, hells and other inauspicious rebirths.

The Body

[41] For the sake of whom you desire (i.e., women), respectful greetings are made many times to intermediaries and messengers. For their sake, the cost of misdeeds and disgrace is never counted. [42] And one commits fearful deeds and wastes one's wealth. But these whom one desires to embrace for the highest bliss are [43] nothing but bones, devoid of a self, and without selfexistence. Rather than being obsessed with them, why not seek refuge in detachment? [44] That face, whether it was seen or unseen, was covered with a veil, and when the veil was finally lifted only with effort, that

face was lowered in modesty. [45] That face that you so longed for, producing great mental afflictions, is now exposed by vultures. Behold it now! Why do you run away? [46] Now that it is being devoured, why do not jealously protect the body you protected from the glancing eyes of others? [47] Look at this pile of meat being devoured by vultures and other scavengers — why did you worship with garlands, sandalwood, and jewelry what is now food for others? [48] You are scared merely by the sight of this immobile pile of bones. Why are you not also afraid of it when it walks as if animated by a demon?

[49] Saliva and excrement are produced from the same source — food. So why do you hate the excrement and yet find joy in drinking saliva (in a kiss)? [50] The lustful are not satisfied touching pillows stuffed with a soft material — they do not think that the human body emits a foul smell. Oh lustful one, you do not know what is unclean! [51] If there is so much infatuation for (the unclean body) that is covered(by skin), why do you dislike it when it is uncovered? If you have no use for the covering, why do you caress it passionately? [52] If you have no passion for what is unclean, why do you embrace another who is merely a cage of bones tied together by muscles and plastered over with the mud of flesh? [53] You yourself contain many unclean things — be content with that. Thus, oh eater of excrement, forget about other bundles of filth!

[54] But you say "It is the flesh I love to see and touch!" How can you desire flesh when it is by its own nature without consciousness? [55] In addition, that consciousness that you desire cannot be seen or touched. And what can be seen and touched is not conscious, so why do you try pointlessly to embrace it? [56] It is not surprising that you do not see that the bodies of others are by nature unclean, but it is indeed strange that you do not understand that your very own body is by nature unclean.

[57] Forsaking the delicate lotus, blossoming under the rays of sunlight in a cloudless sky, why do I, whose mind is absorbed with the unclean, desire this cage of excrement? [58] Since you do not wish to touch the earth and other things covered with excrement, why do you wish to touch the body from which that excrement is cast out? [59] If you have no passion for what is unclean, why do you embrace others who are born from a filthy seed in a field of filth and nourished by filth? [60] You do not like even the smallest of dirty worms because it is born in filth — yet you desire a body that is likewise born of filth but is born from a great amount of filth! [61] You, oh glutton for excrement, despise your own excrement, yet you desire other bags of filth! [62] Even such clean things as camphor, cooked rice, and savory vegetables make the earth filthy after being taken into the mouth and spat or vomited out.

[63] If you cannot admit the excrement in your body, although it is before your eyes, go to the cremation yard and look at other horrible bodies discarded there. [64] Great is the fear when the skin is rent open. Knowing this, how then can joy ever arise in such an object again? [65] The perfume applied to the body comes from sandalwood and not from another (body). Why then are you attracted to others' bodies when the scents come from something else? [66] It is indeed good if a body whose natural smell is foul does not produce passion. Why do people, desiring what is worthless, anoint the body with pleasant scents? [67] If the scent is in fact sandalwood, how can it come from the body? Why are you attracted elsewhere by the scent belonging to something else?

[68] The naked body in its nature state looks horrible — long hair and nails, stained and yellow teeth, filth covering all. [69] This being so, why do you make such an effort to polish it like a weapon for

your own destruction? The world is filled with the insane laboring to deceive themselves!

[70] You are horrified to see the corpses in a cremation yard. Yet you take delight in your town, which is merely a cremation yard full of walking corpses.

The Cost of Desire

[71] And these filthy bodies (of women) are not acquired without a price. In order to earn enough money for one, one exhausts oneself in this life and endues the torments of hells or other lower rebirths in the next. [72] In childhood, there is no opportunity to amass wealth, and as a youth how can one be happy with it? Thus, one's youth is wasted earning money. Once one has grown old, of what use is passion? [73] Some lustful people with unwholesome desires are thoroughly exhausted after a day's work. Coming home in the evening, they lie down like the dead. [74] Others,obliged to travel abroad, suffer the torments of staying away from their homes — they long to see their wives and children but do not see them foryears. [75] The purpose for which they sell themselves also goes unfulfilled. Rather, their lives are wasted uselessly in the service of others. [76] Some have sold themselves and are employed by others, while their wives give birth at the feet of trees in wild forests. [77] Others in order to live become soldiers and enter wars at the risk of their lives. Other foolish ones, confused by their passions, even enter slavery because of their pride. [78] Others who are victims of passion have limbs severed or are impaled on stakes, while others are burned alive or killed with swords.

[79] Wealth causes endless misfortune in amassing and protecting it and in losing it. Because of their distraction, those who are fixed on wealth have no opportunity of release from the misery of the chain of rebirths.

[80] Thus, because of their abundant miseries, those subject to passion have little comfort. They are like beasts who when pulling a cart can grab only bits of grass. [81] For the sake of that piddling happiness that even animals can easily obtain, the good fortune (of having a human life) that is so hard to come by is destroyed by their misdeeds. [82] All that we desire will certainly perish and will hurl us into the hells and other lower realms. The immense work expended all the time for the sake of the body is wasted. [83] Yet with even a millionth part of that effort buddhahood is obtained. But there is no enlightened wisdom for those subject to passion, and their suffering is greater than that of those following the bodhisattva's path.

[84] When one remembers the torments of the hells,no sword, poison, fire, precipice, or enemy can compare with the (fruit of) passions. [85] Having thus become disillusioned with passion, let joy arise in solitude in places empty of strife and distractions: the peace and stillness of the forest. [86] The fortunate ones, contemplating the welfare of others, roam in vast places on rock surfaces cooled by sandal trees under moonbeams and as broad as palaces, fanned by silent and gentle forest breezes. [87] There they live, free from care, as long as they wish — in empty dwellings, at the foot of a tree, or in caves, free of the misery of clinging to and protecting a household. [88] Living as they choose, free of desires, having no ties to anyone, they enjoy a happiness and contentment that even Lord Indra has difficulty finding.

Seeing Oneself in Others

[89] Contemplating the qualities of solitude in ways such as these and calming distractions, one should cultivate the mind of awakening. [90] First one should strive to meditate upon the equality of oneself and others in this way: “In joy and suffering all are equal, and so I should look after all sentient beings as I protect myself.” [91] The hand and other parts are many and different, but as one body they are all to be nurtured. So too, all different beings in their joys and suffering are all one in wanting, like me, happiness.

[92] Even though the suffering in me does not afflict or distress other beings, that suffering becomes unbearable to myself because of my attachment to a sense of “self” (i.e., I see it as mine). [93] Similarly, even though the suffering of others does not afflict me, that suffering too becomes unbearable to me when I conceive others’ sense of self. (That is, others’ suffering becomes unbearable to me when I put myself in their shoes.) [94] Thus, others’ suffering should be dispelled by me because it is suffering like my own. Other sentient beings should also be benefitted by me since they are sentient beings like myself. [95] Since both I and others are equal in our wish to be happy, what is special about me that I strive for only my happiness? [96] And since both I and others are equal in our not desiring fear and suffering, what is special about me that I protect only myself and not others?

Objection : [97] But why should I protect others when their suffering does not cause me any harm?
Reply: But then why should I protect my body against suffering in a future life if it causes me no harm at present? [98] It is a false conception to think “I will experience the suffering (of the next life).” For it is one person who dies and a different person who is reborn.
Objection: [99] Each person is to guard himself from suffering.
Reply: But suffering in my foot is not in the suffering of my hand — so why does the hand protect the foot? [100] Even if the suffering is unrelated (to me), it arises from the sense of “self.” But whatever is unrelated to myself and others is to be destroyed as completely as possible.
[101] The continuum of consciousness, like a series, and an aggregate, like an army, is a fiction. There is no one who “has” suffering. Thus, to whom does this suffering belong? [102] Without exception,all sufferings are without an owner. They are to be prevented precisely because of their nature as suffering. What distinction (of one’s suffering and another’s) can be put on that? [103] If one asks why suffering is to be prevented, we respond that this is accepted by all without dispute. If suffering is to be prevented, then all suffering must be prevented — not merely in my case, but for everyone.
Objection: [104] But this compassion (for others) will bring me misery. So why should I exert myself to cultivate it?
Reply: But seeing all that sentient beings have to suffer, how great is the suffering caused (to myself) by compassion? [105] If the suffering of a single one can destroy the suffering of many, that suffering should be produced by the kind-hearted for the sake of oneself and others. [106] Thus, the bodhisattva Supushachandra, although knowing the harm that King Shuradatta would cause him (for teaching the Buddhist doctrine), accepted his own suffering in order to alleviate the suffering of many. [107] So too, bodhisattvas who have cultivated their continuum of consciousness in this way and who delight in stilling the suffering of others (freely) enter the lowest hell like wild geese landing in a lotus pool (to help those there).

[108] The ocean of happiness that will exist when all sentient beings are released — will that not be enough? What would be the point of wishing for (only one's own) liberation? [109] Thus, although working for the benefit of others, I should not be conceited or consider myself wonderful. And since the only desire is for others' welfare, there is no desire for any karmic fruit of one's actions. [110] Thus, just as I protect myself from all unpleasant occurrences, however small, so should I, with a compassionate and caring mind, act in the same way for the sake of others.

[111] Through habit, there can be the understanding of a "self" located in the drops of sperm, blood, or things of others, even though in fact there is no such entity. [112] So why can't I regard the bodies of others as my own? It also is not difficult to regard my own body as that of others. (These may be meditative exercises; see verse 8.120 below.) [113] Having realized that there is a mistake in cherishing oneself and that loving others produces oceans of virtue (i.e., merit), one should reject all love toward one's "self" and practice the acceptance of others. [114] Just as hands and other limbs are regarded as members of the one body, why aren't all embodied beings regarded as members of the same world? [115] Just as through habit, the idea of a "self" in the body arose, although the body is without a self, why can't a sense of "self" in others be conceived through habit?

[116] Working for the sake of others in this way, there should be neither conceit nor wonder, just as when one feeds oneself there is no expectation of reward. [117] Thus, just as you wish to protect yourself from grief, pain, and so forth, in the same way you should cultivate a compassionate and protective mind for the world. [118] It is for this reason that the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara blessed his name to protect even those who were afraid of being timid in working among others. [119] One should not turn away from what is difficult, since by the power of practice one may not become happy even in the absence of someone whose very name was once frightening.

[120] Whoever wishes quickly to be a refuge for both himself and others should practice this supreme mystery: exchanging oneself for others. [121] Because of excessive attachment to oneself, one becomes frightened even by the smallest danger. This "self" is the source of fear — who would not revile it as an enemy? [122] Whoever with the wish to remove hunger, thirst, and so forth kills birds, fish, deer, and so forth and lies in wait along the roads (as a robber), and [123] who for the sake of gain and honor kills even his own parents and steals offerings to the three jewels of Buddhism (the community of monks and nuns, the doctrine, and the Buddha) will undoubtably burn in the lowest hell. [124] Thus, what wise person would wish to protect and venerate this "self"? Who would honor it and not regard it as an enemy?

[125] "If I give this, what will be left for me to enjoy?" Such selfish thinking is the way of the hungry ghosts. "If I enjoy this, what will be left to give to others?" Such concern for others is the quality of the gods. [126] If one harms others for one's own sake, one will be delivered to the tortures of the hells and so forth. If one harms oneself for the sake of others, one acquires all that is excellent. [127] From wishing for one's own advancement, condemnation, stupidity, and bad rebirths result. By transferring this wish to others, respect, intelligence, and joyful rebirths result. [128] Ordering others for one's own purposes, one experiences servitude oneself. Ordering oneself for the sake of others, one experiences lordship. [129] All who are unhappy in this world are so because of their desire for their own happiness. All who are happy are so because of their desire for the happiness of others.

[130] But why so much talk! Just look at the difference between the naive who work only for their own benefit and the buddhas who work for the benefit of others. [131] There is no attaining buddhahood or even happiness inthis world without exchanging my happiness for the suffering of others.

[132] In this life, let alone the next, the needs oflife are not fulfilled when servants do not do their

work and when masters do not pay wages that are earned. [133] Casting aside the promotion of others' happiness that creates happiness now and in the future, the deluded bring unbearable pain upon themselves by inflicting suffering on others. [134]The harms of this world, the sufferings and fears, all result from attachment to the sense of "self." So of what good is this attachment of mine? [135] If this "self" is not completely forsaken, one cannot forsake suffering, just as it is not possible to avoid being burned if one does not give up fire.
[136] Thus, for the sake of ending my own suffering and others', I shall devote myself to others and accept them as I do myself. [137] Oh mind, be certain of this: "I am linked to others." Now, nothing should be considered by you except the benefit of all sentient beings. [138] (Having dedicated oneself to others' welfare,) it is not proper to use sight and the other sense-faculties for one's own benefit since the eyes and other senses are now others'. It is not proper to use the hands and other limbs for one's own benefit since they are now others'. [139] Thus, sentient beings now being my main concern, seize whatever you see in your body and use it for the benefit of others.
[140] Taking inferiors and others as oneself and oneself as others, consider "envy" and "pride" with a mind free of distorted conceptions: [141] "He is honored, but I am not. I do not have the wealth as he does. He is praised, but I am despised. I suffer. He is happy." [142] I have to remain at work, while he remains at ease. He is respected as great in this world, while I am an inferior possessing no good qualities. [143] What can be done by one without good qualities? Yet I do have some good qualities. There are those to whom I am inferior and those to whom I am superior.

The Self Personified

[144] The failings in my conduct and views and so forth result from the mental afflictions, not from my "self." I should be cured of this, if possible, and I also have accepted (the resulting) suffering. (At this point, Shantideva addresses the self as if it were a person.) [145] If I cannot be cured by another, why belittle me? Of what use are his good qualities to me, when he is the one possessing them? [146] This other one, having no compassion for beings who dwell in the vicious jaws of rebirth in the lower realms, is proud of his external good qualities and wishes to belittle the wise. [147] Having seen another as his equal, he strives to increase his own superiority by gifts and honors for himself, even if it is achieved only through contention.

[148] May my good gifts be made known to the world by every means, but may whatever gifts such a person has not be heard of anywhere. [149] May my faults be hidden that I, and certainly not him, be venerated. May I now gain wealth easily. May I be honored, and not him. [150] I shall take delight in seeing him denigrated, the object of scornand derision to all.

[151] It is said that this wretched one is trying to compete with me. But what are his knowledge, insight, form, pedigree, or wealth? [152] Hearing of my good qualities being made well-known to all in this way, I thoroughly enjoy elation, with my hair tingling with delight. [153] If he has any possessions and he works for me, I shall give him only enough to live on and forcibly take the rest. [154] He is to be shaken from his happiness and yoked to continual suffering. Because of him, we have all endured the anguish of hundreds of rebirths.

Addressing the Mind

[155] (Shantideva now addresses his mind.) Innumerable ages have passed while you pursued your own ends, but all this gigantic effort of yours has led only to suffering. [156] Thus, I entreat you, engage yourself in this task (of working for the welfare of others by exchanging yourself for others) at once. Later you will realize the benefits of such conduct, because the Buddha's word is true. [157] If in the past you made this your practice, this current condition of life — devoid of a buddha's great joy — would not have come about. [158] Thus, just as you have come to hold these drops of sperm and blood of others as your own, so should you also develop a sense of "I" with regard to other beings. [159] Having become devoted to others, take whatever your body possesses and use it for the benefit of others.

[160] Practice jealousy toward yourself in this manner: "This one is happy while another is not. This is one is exalted, while another is not. The other works, but this one does not." [161] Pull yourself down from happiness and yoke yourself to the suffering of others. Examine your faults, asking "Why am I doing this now?" [162] Take any fault committed by another as your own, but even the slightest fault of your own should be announced to the great sages. [163] Spread the reputation of others that it might outshine your own. Set yourself to tasks for others as if you were the lowest servant. [164] Do not praise yourself for your trifling share of temporary good qualities, for you are full of faults. Act so that no one becomes aware of these qualities. [165] In sum, may whatever harm you have inflicted on others to benefit yourself fall on you for the benefit of sentient beings.

[166] Nor should you be so encouraged that you become too talkative. Rather, like a new bride, you should be demure, timid, and restrained. [167] Thus, oh mind, be like this and abide in it and do notact as before (i.e., selfishly). In this way you are to be controlled and punished if you transgress. [168] If you do not act accordingly after being so instructed, I shall punish you, for all faults reside in you alone. [169] Where will you go? I now see you and will destroy your insolence. The time when you ruined me is past.

[170] Now give up any hope that today you work for yourself. I have sold you to others without any worries about your service. [171] If out of inattention I do not give you away (for service for others), it is certain that you will hand me over to the guardians of the hells. [172] Handed over by you in that way, I have been tormented for a long time by you. Remembering your hostile actions, I shall destroy you, oh slave to your own wishes.

The Body

[173] If I wish to be happy, I should not be happy with myself. If I wish for protection, I should protect others. [174] The more that is done to protect this body, the more it disintegrates and the more it is sensitive (to suffering). [175] With (the mind) having fallen so far that even everything on the earth is not able to satisfy its longings, who could satisfy its wish? [176] Mental afflictions and frustrated hopes are born from unsatisfied wishes, while for one who is free of hope there is unexhaustible good fortune. [177] Thus, never give the desires of the body the opportunity to increase. The best of all possessions are those things that do not grasp you as attractive.

[178] The final destiny of this body is ashes. (Being only matter,) it is without motion and is moved by another. Why do I cling to this unbearable and unclean form? [179] Of what use is this contraption

to me, whether I am alive or dead? How is it different from any clod of earth? Oh, why can't I dispel this sense of "self"! [180] Through favoring this body, suffering for no purpose accrues. Of what use is anger or pleading for something that is similar to a piece of wood? [181] Whether I am caring for it in this manner or it is being devoured by vultures, this body feels neither attraction or aversion. Why then am I so attached to it? [182] This body does not feel anger when derided nor pleasure when praised. For whom then do I make such an effort? [183] Those who appreciate this body (of mine) are said to be my friends. All people love their bodies — why then are they not as dear to me as my own?

[184] Thus, free of any attachment, I shall give up this body for the benefit of beings. Thus, despite its many faults, I shall carry it as a tool for that activity.

Conclusion

[185] Enough then of these worldly matters! I shall follow the wise, and remembering the instructions given by them on vigilance, I shall turn away from sloth and mental dullness. [186] Thus, in order to rend the veil of illusion, I shall turn my mind from the false paths and rest it in evenmindedness on the perfect path.

Chapter 9: Wisdom

[1] It was for the sake of wisdom that the Buddha taught this entire set of perfections. Thus, from a desire for the cessation of suffering, one should generate wisdom.

The Two Types of Truth

[2] This is to be understood: truth is twofold — the conventional and the ultimate. Reality as it truly is is not within the range of the intellect (i.e., within the power of the mind that makes distinctions). Thus, the intellect is said to be conventional. [3] The world is seen in two ways: by the yogin and by the ordinary people. The world according to the ordinary person is driven away by the world according to the yogin. [4] And there are even differences by degree of understanding among the yogins: those with lesser understanding are contradicted by those with greater understanding.

It is claimed by us that both yogins and ordinary people employ the same examples because of a failure to examine the purpose of the examples accepted by both. [5] Entities are seen by the world, but they are seen (by yogins) in fact as constructions from the point of view of what is real. Ordinary people never think "This is like an illusion." Therein is the disagreement between the worldly and the yogins. [6] When there is direct perception, there is form and so forth by popular consensus, but not by the valid means of knowledge (of reality as it is). The consensus is wrong, like the general acceptance of purity in what is impure, and so forth. (Even direct perception may be contaminated by the notion of self-existent entities.)

[7] For the sake of making the world understand, entities were referred to by the Buddha.
Hinayana objection: Since (according to you) in reality entities are not even momentary, isn't it a contradiction to say that they are even conventionally real?

Reply: [8] There is no fault in the yogins' use of conventional truth. They see the true reality in the world. Otherwise (if ordinary people saw reality as it really is), conventional wisdom would contradict the yogins' understanding of a woman as impure.
Objection: [9] How in reality does merit spring (from revering the Buddha) if the Buddha is like an illusion? If a sentient being is like an illusion, how, once one has died, can one be reborn?
Reply: [10] As long as there is an aggregation of conditions, then indeed illusions occurs. Why is a sentient being considered real simply because it has a longer continuity of conditions?

Yogachara View of Consciousness

Yogachara objection : [11] When there is no consciousness (of a real being) in the event of killing an illusory being, there is no demerit (for the actor).

Reply : But when one is equipped with illusory consciousness (i.e., seeing nonexistent beings as real), demerit and merit arise as fruits of one's actions.
Objection: [12] Because spells and so forth do not have the ability (to produce minds), the illusion of consciousness itself cannot arise.
Reply: Since illusions in fact arise from different conditions, the kinds of illusions are also varied. [13] Nowhere is there the power to produce anything whatsoever from one condition.
Objection: If one attains nirvana by means of ultimate truth, then one proceeds in the cycle of rebirths by conventional truth. [14] In that case, even the Buddha would proceed in the cycle of rebirths (since he utilized conventional truths). What then the use of practices leading to enlightenment?
Reply: If there is no interruption of the continuity of conditions, then even illusion is not interrupted. [15] But from the cutting off of conditions, there is no arising even according to conventional truths.
Question: Since false perceptions do not even exist, by whom is illusion apprehended?
Reply: [16] If for you Yogacharas even illusions do not exist, then what is there to apprehend?
Objection: It is merely the appearance of the mind (i.e., nothing external), if it is anything at all from the point of view of what is real.
Reply: [17] If illusions are only mind, what is seen by what? The Buddha himself proclaimed that the mind does not see the mind. [18] Just as the blade of a sword cannot cut itself, so too the mind cannot see itself. If you think thus "It is like a lamp illuminating itself," we respond that [19] the lamp is not illuminated since it is not concealed by darkness.
Objection: (An illusion in the mind) is not like the blueness of a clear crystal that depends on another object for its blueness. [20] This shows that some (perceptions) are seen to be dependent on otherthings and some are not dependent.
Reply: Nothing that previously was not blue can make itself blue (and so your example does not help to understand how consciousness can have an illusion). [21] Indeed, what blue can make itself blue by itself? It cannot make itself blue in the absence of blueness already. (Alternative verse: [21] When one knows "The lamp shines," it is told by one who knows it. When one knows "The mind shines," by whom, knowing that is so, is it told?) [22] Whether the mind shines or not is not known since the mind is not seen by anyone. It would be as pointless to discuss as the beauty of the daughter of a barren woman.
Objection: [23] If there is no self-knowledge, how is a cognition remembered?
Reply: There is memory from the association with other experiences, like a rat-poison (whose effects

are known by observing effects on other animals but not by one's own introspection).
Objection: [24] It reveals itself from seeing other connected conditions (i.e., by yogic powers one can see into other minds).
Reply: By the application of magical ointment, a jar is seen, but the ointment itself cannot be seen (or, the ointment itself does not become the jar). [25] Thus, seeing, hearing, and knowing are indeed not denied here. But from the point of view of reality, conceptualizations, which are the cause of suffering, are denied here.
Objection: [26] Illusions are not different from the mind, even though they cannot be said to be identical.
Reply: How could a thing be neither "not different" from the mind nor "identical"? There could be no such thing (since anything real real must be one or the other). [27] Just as an illusion may be seen, even though it is unreal, so too the mind that (conventionally) is the seer is unreal.
Objection: The cycle of rebirths must have a material basis. Otherwise, it would be like space.
Reply: [28] But how could the absence of an entity be endowed to function by recourse to a material basis? (That is, how can what is unreal become the basis of anything else?) Indeed, the mind, which according to you has only nonexistent companions, would be alone. [29] If consciousness is freed from what can be perceived, then everyone is an enlightened buddha. And in that case, what advantage is achieved when just "nothing but mind" is supposed?
Objection: [30] How are mental afflictions stopped even when we recognize that everything is like an illusion?
Reply: Even lust for an illusory woman arises in the man who created the illusion. [31] When the habits arising from mentalafflictions toward the illusory woman have not abated for the creator who knows she is an illusion, at the moment of seeing her his aptitude for "emptiness" is then weak. [32] From the presence of an aptitude toward emptiness, the aptitude to see entities as real abates. And from repeatedly thinking "There is nothing whatsoever," even this is given up later (when one is no longer thinking in terms of real, distinct entities).
Objection: [33] If an entity is not apprehended for which the claim "It does not exist" is appropriate, then how could its absence, which is unsupported (by anything), stand before the mind?
Reply: [34] When neither an entity nor its absence stands before the mind, then because there are no other possible states, the mind, having no support (in anything real or unreal), becomes tranquil. [35] Just as a wish-granting jewel or a wishing-tree fulfills wishes, so the image of the Buddha is seen by the disciple because of the Buddha's vow to help others. [36] After a herbalist who made a pillar with healing power has long since died, the pillar protects one who consumes poison. [37] So also the Buddha's "pillar" continues to accomplish all to be done for those who adhere to the bodhisattva's path, even though the Bodhisattva has been released (from rebirths).

Abhidharmists on Liberation and Emptiness

Hinayana objection : [38] (If there is no mind, then the Buddha has no mind, so) how can merit accrue from offerings made to what has no mind (since he then cannot be aware of the offerings)?

Reply : It has been taught that offerings made to one who is present or has passed into the extinction of enlightenment are the same. [39] And it is established on scriptural authority that there is meritorious fruit, whether from the conventional or ultimate point of view. Otherwise, how could it thus be taught

“Offerings made to the true Buddha are fruitful”?

Objection : [40] Liberation comes from seeing truth/reality. What is the point of seeing “emptiness”?
Reply: The reason is that the scriptures say “There is no enlightenment without this path.”
Objection: [41] The Mahayana tradition is not established.
Reply: How is your tradition established?
Objection: Because it is established for both of us.
Reply: But in the beginning, your tradition too was not established. [42] And the confidence (you have) in the conditions thereapply also to the Mahayana (e.g., an unbroken line of teachers). In addition, if something were true because it is accepted by two parties, then there would be truth in the Vedas and so forth. [43] If you reject the Mahayana because it is a matter of dispute, then you have to abandon your own tradition because it contends with non-Buddhists and because your own tradition is disputed by other Buddhist schools.
[44] The Buddhist doctrine has its root in the life of a monk, and indeed the life of a monk is difficult. Also, the release of minds that depend on objects is difficult. [45] If liberation is the elimination of mental afflictions, it should occur immediately after that elimination. But the power of karmic fruit is seen in those who are without mental afflictions. (That is, karmic consequences of past actions still occur after enlightenment.)
Objection: [46] At first, the fruit is fixed, but those who have eliminated mental afflictions have no cravings that lead to grasping (i.e., rebirth).
Reply: Even if there is no afflicted craving, why is there no craving associated with delusion? [47] Craving is dependent on the condition of sensation (or “feeling”), and it is seen that yogins have sensations. When there is a consciousness with objects, the mind has places (for sensations to occur and thus for craving). [48] Without emptiness, the mind is fettered and will arise again, even after having attained a meditative state lacking ideas. Thus, one should cultivate emptiness (through meditation).
[49] One accepts whatever is said in a scripture, if one believes it is what was taught by the Buddha. In general, nothing accepted in your texts is equal to the Mahayana. [50] If all is found flawed by one transgression, (why not also the reverse:) if one thing in a text is agreeable, why isn’t everything in it accepted as declared by the Buddha? [51] Even the great Kashyapa and others did not plumb the profound depths of the doctrine — who will pronounce a doctrine “unacceptable” simply because it cannot be comprehended by you?
[52] This is the fruit of emptiness: (the bodhisattva’s) abiding in the cycle of rebirths, even though freed from fear and clinging, for the sake of the ones who suffer by reason of delusion. [53] So, it is not proper to object to the wing of emptiness (the other wing being compassion). Thus, having no doubts, emptiness is to be cultivated. [54] Indeed, emptiness is the opposite of the darkness of the mental afflictions and of thehindrance of the knowable (conventional entities). Why then wouldn’t one who desires omniscience not quickly cultivate emptiness?

Views of the Self

[55] Fear arises from whatever thing arouses suffering. But emptiness is the calming of suffering. Thus, how is fear born? [56] If the “I” (i.e., a self) existed at all, then fear may come from any direction whatsoever. But if there is no “I,” for whom will there be any fear? [57] I am not teeth, hair,

bone, blood, snot, phlegm, pus, or lymph. [58] I am not fat, sweat, lungs, liver, or other inner organs, nor excrement or urine. [59] I am not flesh or muscle, not body heat or breath. I am not the openings of the body or in any way the six cognitions (of the mind and the five sense-faculties).

[60] If the knowledge of sound were permanent, then sound would be grasped at all times. But without a (real) object to know, what does one know by which one could speak of "knowledge"? [61] If notknowing something is knowledge, it would reduce to the absurdity that even a stick is knowledge. Thus, it is certain that in the absence of something knowable nearby, there is no knowledge.

[62] (If consciousness is one as the Samkhyas say,) why at the time one knows precisely a visual form doesn't one also hear?
Samkhya objection: Because when sound is not near, there is no knowledge of that.
Reply: [63] When something has the nature to apprehend sound, how could it apprehend visual form (which is a different type of sense-object)?
Objection: It is like one person who can be both a father and a son.
Reply: But there is no "father" or "son" from the point of view of what is truly real. [64] There is no "light," "passion," or "darkness" (the three "qualities" that make up things according to the Samkhyas). So too, there are no "father" or "son" (made of those nonexistent qualities).
In addition, the self-nature (of visual form) is not apprehended when sound is apprehended.
Objection: [65] (Consciousness) remains the same — it is merely taking on different roles (when we apprehend different objects), as with an actor. (Its roles) are impermanent, (but its nature remains the same).
Reply: If that one thing has other natures, it is an unprecedented type of "oneness." [66] If a different nature is the real one, please state that true nature. If it is the state of knowledge that is the same in all people, then all people are one. [67] And what has intentions (i.e.,a mind) and what does not are also one because the two are both equal in their existence. And if the apparent differences are in fact erroneous, how could you speak of "sameness" (i.e., only two distinct things can share one nature)?
[68] Indeed, there is no "I" (i.e., a self) without thinking, since it would lack sentience, like a cloth and so forth do.
Nyaya objection: The self is not by nature conscious, but it possesses consciousness.
Reply: If that were so, it reduces to the absurdity that the nonconscious self is destroyed (once consciousness appears).
[69] If the self is unchanging, what is to be done with sentience? If the state of the self is believed to be without the capacity to know or act (i.e, the Samkhya "self"), then space has a self.
Objection: [70] Without one self, there is no connection of an action and its karmic consequences. When an action is completed and then completely perishes, of whose action will there then be fruit? (That is, the one who experiences the fruit will then be different from the one who produced it.)
Reply: [71] It is agreed by both of us that the action and the fruit have separate supports (i.e., they do not occur to the same physical thing). In this case, isn't it a pointless discussion to claim "The self is inactive"? [72] It is never seen that what possesses the cause possesses the fruit. Because there is a oneness to the stream of consciousness, it is taught that the actor is the enjoyer (of the fruit of the action).
[73] The past mind and the future mind is not the self since that self is in not present now. Thus, the present mind is the self, and when it has ceased the self too no longer exists. [74] Just as nothing is

found when the (hollow) trunk of a banana tree is split open, so too the self is found to be unreal when sought through analysis.
Objection: [75] If there are no sentient beings, for whom can there be compassion?
Reply: For the sake of the fruit (i.e., enlightenment), it is imagined by a convention of delusion that there are “sentient beings.”
Objection: [76] If there are no sentient beings, who gains the fruit of enlightenment?
Reply: Since that is true (i.e., there are no real sentient beings), the effort (to attain enlightenment) is from a deluded idea. But for the sake of ending suffering, the delusion of the fruit of “enlightenment” is not removed. [77] However, the delusion of a sense of “I,” which is the cause of suffering, only increases from the delusion that there is a self. And if that is the unavoidable result, then the contemplation of selflessness is best.
[78] The body is not the feet, the calves, the thighs, or the hips. Nor is it the belly, the back, the chest, or the arms. [79] It is not the hands, the sides, the armpits, or the area of the shoulders. The bodyis not the neck or the head. In which of these many parts is the body? [80] If the body abides in all the parts, it is not present in one single spot. The parts do abide in the parts (and if the body had parts, it could reside in each part) — so where does the (partless) body itself reside? [81] If the entire body is present in each part, then the body abides in the hands, and so forth. Then there would be precisely as many bodies as there are hands and other parts. [82] If the body is neither inside nor outside the parts, how could the body be in the parts? And since the body is not separate from the body parts, how then could a separate body be found? [83] Thus, there is no body. (That is, there is no separate, real entity called “a body” in addition to the parts.) But from delusion there is still the idea of a “body” in the hands and so forth. It is like imagining a person in a post because of the shape. [84] As long as there is a completeness of conditions, so long is the body seen as a person. In the same way, as long as there is a completeness of conditions in the hands and so forth, so long is a body seen here.
[85] In the same way (as the body is not a real entity), how can there be a (real) foot from the assemblage of toes? (The toes in turn are not real) because they are an assemblage of joints, which also (are not real) because of their division into their parts. [86] The parts can be divided minutely into particles. The particles too can be divided according to the six directions (the four compass directions and up and down). The six directions are empty space. Thus, there are no (real) particles.
[87] In this way, form being like a dream, who could be excited about the body after this analysis? And when likewise there is no body, then what is a man and what is a woman?

Feelings

[88] If suffering is real, why does it not assail joyous people? (If suffering is real, it would be permanent and so always present.) If pleasure is pure, why doesn’t it shine for one fallen into distress?

Objection : [89] When pleasure is not perceived, it is because it is overcome by something stronger.
Reply: How can there be a feeling that is yours when, by its nature, it is not experienced by you?
Objection: [90] (There is a feeling because) even when the gross form of suffering has been removed, suffering in a subtle state remains.
Reply: If the other state is one of satisfaction, still it is only a subtle state of satisfaction. [91] If suffering does not arise when conditions do not permit it, then to consider the result to be a “feeling”

is nothing but a mental construction (i.e., imaginary and not real). [92] Thus, the analysis that is the antidote of that (feeling) is to be cultivated. Indeed, yogins have the food of meditation that is produced from the field of the imaginary.
[93] If there is a space between the senses and objects, how could there be a meeting of those two? If there is no distance between senses and objects, there is a oneness of the two, and so what would meet with what? [94] There is no penetration of one particle by others becauseeach is the same — being free of space (i.e., there is no space "inside" to penetrate). In the absence of penetration, there is no mingling. If there is no mingling, there is no contact. [95] And how is it reasonable to speak of the meeting of what is without parts? (That is, there is no meeting of the "sides" of partless particles.) And if what is without parts is seen in combination, please show it to us. [96] In addition, it certainly is invalid that a meeting is possible for the formless cognition (since the immaterial has no parts to meet). Nor can it be part of an assemblage since an assemblage is unreal, as seen by the pervious analysis.
[97] Accordingly, when there is no contact, how can feeling (i.e., a sensesensation) arise? What is the purpose of vexing yourself over this? From what, and to whom, could harm occur? [98] Since there is no (real) person who "feels" and no "feeling," why when you realize this, oh Craving, do you not split asunder? [99] Seeing or touching by the "self" is seen to be like a dream or illusion. Feeling is not seen by thought because it arises simultaneously with it. [100] Feelings born earlier are remembered by one born later. They can be remembered, but they cannot be experienced. So too, one does not experience one's "own self," nor is it experienced by another. [101] And there is no one who feels since, from the point of view of reality, there is no "feeling." Since this totality is without a "self," who is there to be troubled by "feeling"?

Knowledge

[102] The mind does not dwell in the sense-faculties, nor in visual form and the other sense-objects, nor in between. Nor can the mind be grasped inside or outside the body or elsewhere. [103] What is not in the body or mingling or separate anywhere — that is nothing whatsoever. Thus, sentient beings by their nature are (already) completely liberated.

[104] If knowledge precedes the existence of a known object, on what does its occurrence depend? If knowledge arises along with the object that is known, what is the origin of its objective support? [105] However, if knowledge arises after the known object, then from what does the knowledge arise? Thus, the arising of any basic phenomenon of the experienced world cannot be ascertained.

Objection : [106] If in this way there can be nothing conventional, how can there be "two truths"? If it is by means of another conventional truth that we attained liberation, how may a sentient being become liberated?

Reply : [107] The "one who is liberated" is something imagined in another's thought. But it is not a conventional truth of one who is liberated. If thoughts occur later in the liberated state, then they are still conventional truths. But since the thought "one who is liberated" (i.e., a real person) is not imagined, it does not exist as a conventional truth for him.

[108] "Conceptualization" and "what is conceptualized" are mutually dependent. Thus, all analysis is

said to be based on what is conventionally accepted.

Objection : [109] If what has been analyzed must be analyzed by further analysis, then that analysis would also have to be analyzed. Thus, there would never be an end (to the regress of analyses).

Reply : [110] If an object of analysis has been fully analyzed, the analysis finds no (real) object as its basis. Because there is no basis, analysis does not arise, and this is called “nirvana.” [111] However, one for whom both the analysis and its basis are real is in a very difficult position. But if an object of knowledge is established based on knowledge, what will establish the knowledge? [112] On the other hand, if knowledge is established by an object of knowledge, how could the existence of the object be established? If the two mutually establish each other, then neither of them can be truly existing (since they are then both dependent). [113] If there cannot be a “father” without a “son,” how can there be a son? If there is no “son,” then there is no “father.” So too, neither the object of knowledge nor knowledge truly exists.

Causation

Objection : [114] A sprout arises from a seed. The seed is indicated by the existence of that sprout. So too, why is the existence of the object of knowledge not indicated by the knowledge that results from it?

Reply : [115] It is an act of knowledge that is different from (seeing) the sprout that tells of the existence of the seed. (It is inferred, not directly perceived, as with seeing the sprout.) But what will indicate the existence of the knowledge that arises from an object of knowledge? [116] The worldly people observe directly that all phenomena have a cause. For example, the variety of lotus parts — its stem and so forth — arise from a variety of causes.

Objection : [117] What causes the variety of causes?
Reply: It results from a variety of previous causes.
Objection: How is a particular cause able to produce a particular result? *Reply*: By the force of the preceding causes.
Objection: [118] The creator god Ishvara is the cause of the world. *Reply*: Then please explain who Ishvara is. If the answer is “He is the

great elements (earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness),” then why is there such a fuss over a mere name? [119] In addition, earth and the other elements are multiple, impermanent, without activity, not divine (i.e., not of the nature of a *deva*), trampled under foot, and impure — thus, they are not Ishvara. [120] Space also cannot be Ishvara because it is without activity. Nor is it the self since that (self) has been already refuted. And if he is beyond conception, what can be said of his inconceivable creativity?

[121] And what does he seek to create? A “self” and the elements? But are they not, like a creator, eternal (and thus cannot be created)? And knowledge (or consciousness) arises from the object of knowledge (and not from a creator). [122] Suffering and happiness result from karmic action — so what has he created? And if the cause has no beginning, how can there be any effect? (That is, the

creator would never become active and so no effect occurs.)

[123] Since he does not depend on any causes or conditions, why doesn't he create continuously? There is nothing whatsoever that he has not made — so what could he depend on? [124] If he does depend on other things, then it is those things that are the cause, not he. When the relevant conditions are present, he is compelled to act, and when they are absent, he cannot act. [125] If he acts even though he has no desire to act, then he is dependent. And even if he created out of a desire, then he is likewise dependent on his desire. What then becomes of the quality of being "the Lord"?

[126] Those who claim that this world is created out of partless particles that are eternal (i.e., the Vaisheshikas) have already been refuted. The Samkhyas hold that primal matter is the permanent cause of the world. [127] According to them, the three qualities of "light," "passion," and "darkness" in equilibrium are "primal matter." The universe exists when they are not in equilibrium. [128] But it is not possible that what is one has a three-fold nature. Thus, there is no one "primal matter." So too, the three qualities do not exist since they too are said to have three aspects each. [129] And in the absence of the three qualities, then for you thingssuch as sound are not possible. In addition, it is impossible for things without consciousness, such as cloth, to have feelings such as pleasure.

Objection : [130] It is the nature of entities to cause such feelings. *Reply*: But truly existent "entities" have already be refuted by analysis. In addition, for you the cause of such things as cloth is (the three qualities of) pleasure and so forth. Moreover, pleasure and so forth do not exist because primal matter does not exist. [131] (Conventionally,) pleasure and so forth arise from things such as cloth, (but upon analysis) such things do not exist, and so pleasure likewise does not truly exist. In addition, no permanence of pleasure and so forth is ever seen. [132] If feelings such as pleasure are truly real, (they are permanent and so) why aren't they constantly perceived?
Samkhya objection: (When suffering is present,) pleasure becomes subtle. (It is the states of coarseness and subtlety that are impermanent.)
Reply: How can something be both subtle and coarse? [133] Since it becomes subtle upon ceasing to be coarse, this (alternation of) subtle and coarse is impermanent. Why then do you not accept this impermanence of all other things? [134] If the coarse manifestation of pleasure is not different from the feeling of pleasure, then clearly pleasure is impermanent. If you accept that "Something that does not exist cannot come into existence, since it does not exist," then [135] you must accept, however reluctantly, the arising of something manifest that does not exist (i.e., the appearance of a previously nonmanifest effect from a cause). If you accept that the effect exists unmanifested in the cause, then one who is eating food is eating excrement. [136] So too, having bought cotton seeds with the money that you would spend on finished clothing, you should clothe yourself with the seeds.
Objection: Due to delusion, ordinary people do not see (the clothes in the cotton seeds).
Reply: But one who knows reality as it truly is is also in the same position (of not seeing the clothes in the cotton seeds). [137] (And if the effect is in the cause,) then this knowledge must be present in ordinary people. Why do they not see (the clothes in the seeds)? And if you claim that the knowledge of ordinary people is not a valid means to knowledge, then even the direct perception of something manifest is untrue.

Emptiness

Objection : [138] If any valid means of knowledge is not in fact a valid means of knowledge, then knowledge is false. Even emptiness is not reality as it truly is, and meditation does not lead (to such knowledge).

Reply : [139] If there is no apprehending something falsely imagined as real, then there is no grasping of its nonexistence (since nothing is grasped to begin with). For if no entity is real, the negation of them indeed is also not real (since there is nothing to negate). [140] Thus, when one's child dies in a dream, imagining "He does not exist" overwhelms imagining "He exists," but both imaginings are equally false (since there is no real being).

[141] Thus, by means of this analysis, there is nothing without a cause, and nothing exists in its causes taken individuallyor collectively. [142] Nor has anything come from another, nor does it persist or cease. What then is the difference between an illusion and what is takenby the naive out of confusion to be real? [143] Whatever is created by a magician or by causes should be examined: where do they come from? and where do they go (when they cease)? [144] What is seen only as the result of a cause and is not seen without that cause is like a reflection — how can such an artifice be real? [145] What would be the purpose of a cause for something that truly exists? And what need is there for a cause if something doesnot exist at all? [146] Even by a hundred million causes, an entity that does not truly exist cannot be transmuted (into a real entity). For how could an entity in the state of nonexistence be changed into a real entity? And what else is there that could become an entity? [147] If an entity is not real at the time it is nonexistent, how could it become a real entity? For unless the absence of an entity is itself a real entity, (nonexistence) cannot disappear. [148] And unless the absence of an entity cannot be removed from the state of nonexistence, an entity cannot arise. But a real entity cannot also become the "absence of an entity," since one thing cannot have a dual self-nature. [149] Thus, there is no existence or cessation of a real entity. All things in the world are unarisen and without cessation. [150] All beings are like a dream. When analyzed, they are like the (hollow) trunk of a banana tree. There is no difference in substance between those who have attained nirvana and those who have not (since both are empty of self-existence).

[151] Thus, when all the basic phenomena of the experienced world are empty in this way, what is there to gain and what is there to lose? Who can be honored or insulted by whom and how? [152] From what do pleasure and suffering result? What is pleasing or repulsive? In this quest for the true nature of things, what can be craved, and who can crave? [153] When analyzed, who is there who lives or dies? Who will arise, and who has ceased? Who is a relative, and who is whose friend?

[154] May the naive, who get angry in quarrels and elated in celebrations, accept that everything is like (empty) space. [155]Seeking happiness through demeritorious actions, they lead miserable lives — they grieve, strive, dispute with each other, and despair; slashing and stabbing,they injure each other. [156] Attaining auspicious rebirths (as gods and human beings) again and again and enjoying their pleasures again and again,they die and fall into the hells to suffer unbearable torments for exceedingly long periods (when their merit is exhausted). [157] There are many abysses inthe world, and reality as it truly is is not found there. There is a mutual contradiction (between the ordinary view of the world and ultimate truth, or alternatively between different views), and there is no (attaining) reality as it truly is.

[158] In the world, there are shoreless oceans of unbearable suffering exceeding all accounts. Here

one’s strength diminishes, and life is short. [159] Here all activities are for life and health, concerned with hunger, fatigue, exhaustion, sleep, misfortunes, and the fruitless association with the naive. [160] Thus, this life passes quickly and pointlessly. The discernment of reality is hard to come by. In such circumstances, where are the means to prevent our habitual distractions? [161] Here too, Mara (the Lord of Death who tempts with prospects of pleasure) works hard to cast us into realms of misfortune.

Here too, there are a proliferation of wrong paths, and in such circumstances it is hard to resolve our doubts (about the correct path). [162] The opportune time (to begin the quest for enlightenment) is also hard to find, as is finding the presence of an enlightened buddha. Hard too is avoiding the torrent of mental afflictions. Alas! What a continuous flow of suffering! [163] Indeed, how grievous are those adrift in the flood of suffering who, even though they experience great misery, are unaware of their own plight! [164] They are like those (ascetics) who repeatedly pour water on themselves and re-enter a fire and yet, while suffering greatly, think this is pleasurable. [165] So too, those who live as if there were no aging or death are the first taken by the Lord of Death and then have to suffer great miseries (in the hells).

[166] When shall I be able to relieve those tormented by the fires of suffering with the rain of my accumulated happiness arising from the clouds of my merit? [167] After sufficiently accumulating merit by perceiving conventional truth, when shall I respectfully teach (the ultimate truth of) emptiness to those brought to ruin by the view of perceiving self-existence?

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The Introductory Verses from The Collection of the Teachings (Shiksha-samucchaya-karikas)

Introduction

[1] Since fear and suffering are not dear to either myself or others, what distinguishes myself that I should protect myself and not others?
[2] With the desire to end one's suffering and the wish to climb to the peak of happiness, and having firmly planted the root of faith, the mind should be fixed on enlightenment.
[3] From the Mahayana come the vows of the bodhisattva. From these, one should learn the essential points by which one becomes free of misfortune.
[4] For the sake of all beings, one should dedicate oneself, one's objects of enjoyment, and one's merit from the past, present, and future. Cultivate, purify, and protect each of these.

Protection

[5] Oneself, one's objects of enjoyment, and one's merit are given for the enjoyment of all beings. If beings are unprotected, how can these things be enjoyed? What gift is actually given if it cannot be enjoyed? [6] Thus, oneself, one's objects of enjoyment, and one's merit should be protected for the enjoyment of all beings by not abandoning a spiritual friend (who guides you on the path) and by constantly studying the religious texts.

[7] How should oneself be protected? By abandoning what is without value (for attaining the goal of enlightenment). How is this achieved? By avoiding any fruitless activity. [8] This is accomplished by constant meditative mindfulness. Mindfulness arises through intense devotion (to the goal). Such devotion arises from ascetic practice and from knowing great inner tranquility. [9] "One whose mind is focused knows reality as it truly is," said

the Buddha. By turning away from actions, the mind does not move from tranquility.

[10] One who is steadfast in all things wins over worthy people by speaking sweetly and gently and will be acceptable to all. [11] But those worldly people who dislike the sons of the Buddha and reject them burn in the hells like a (smoldering) fire covered with ash.

[12] In the *Cloud of Jewels Sutra*, the Buddha summarized the bodhisattva's forbearance: "With diligence, one should avoid anything that causes beings' impurity (or 'their lack of tranquility')."

[13] By clothes, medicine, and so forth, one protects oneself. But indulging in the enjoyments of one's desires leads toan afflicted error.
[14] The protection of the objects of enjoyment is not difficult for one who observes this precept: "In all matters, begin meritorious acts and know their limits."
[15] Merit is protected by detachment from the fruits of one's own affairs (i.e., actions). One should

not regret (what one has not done), or, having done something, not boast. [16] Beware of gain and honors. Always shun arrogance. A bodhisattva should be pure, and let all doubt about the Buddhist doctrine be laid aside.

Purification

[17] The enjoyment of one who is purified will become proper for beings, like well-cooked clean rice.
[18] Just as a grain choked by weeds becomes diseased and does not flourish, so too a son of the Buddha who is choked with mental afflictions does not advance.
[19] What is "purifying oneself"? It is purging all mental afflictions and demeritorious actions by following the meaning of the words of the fullyenlightened Buddha. When this can be done without effort, there is no longer any bad rebirths.
[20] Have patience. Seek to hear the teaching (of the Buddha). And then take refuge in a forest abode. There be intent on focusing your mind. Meditate on what is impure and so forth.
[21] The purification of karmic merit is from purifying "right livelihood," from understanding the purification of the objects of enjoyment, and from actions whose womb is compassion and emptiness (the twin "wings" of a bodhisattva).

Meditative Cultivation

[22] Those who may receive (from a bodhisattva) are many, and this (i.e., what a bodhisattva has to offer) is little. What can be done about that? It does not give rise to satisfaction. Thus, cultivate (the perfections to increase what can be given).

[23] What is cultivation of oneself? It is the cultivation of strength and energy. The cultivation of the objects of enjoyment is from the giving that arises from the womb of compassion and emptiness.

[24] With effort, first make the firm resolve (to become a fullyenlightened buddha to help others). Then, making compassion primary, cultivate the auspicious (i.e., what produces merit). [25] Always devoutly keep the course of the bodhisattva, praising (the buddhas)and so forth. Always practice faith and so forth, and cherish the loving-kindness of the buddhas and so forth.

[26] In sum, the cause of the increase in merit is the "mind of awakening (i.e., the aspiration to become a fully-enlightenedbuddha)," the detached gift of the Buddhist doctrine, and benefitting all beings in all circumstances.

[27] The attainment of the "right efforts" is fromstriving to maintain vigilance, and the attainment of mindfulness is through full awareness and deep thought.

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Two Early Madhyamaka Critiques of the Existence of God

The Vedic gods were initially a pantheon of diverse sources and forces behind what we observe. But a form of theism (henotheism) also arose in India early on: the various gods were seen merely as different manifestations of one supreme god who was personal in nature. The most prominent theistic group among the Hindus in the early period was probably the Bhagavatins, who worshiped Vishnu in his incarnation as Krishna. The *Bhagavad-gita* was also composed in this period. The philosophical Hindu Nyaya-Vaisheshika school, which is a favorite target of Nagarjuna's, also defended theism. Madhyamikas were not the only Buddhists in India to take issue with the idea of any cosmic creator of all that exists. (Buddhists do accept the existence of "gods [*devas*]" — divine, long-enduring but mortal beings residing invarious heavens — but none is the creator of all that exists.) Yogacharins also composed critiques of none is the creator of all that exists.) Yogacharins also composed critiques of 100; also see his pp. 85-86 note 4 for earlier Buddhist criticisms.)

Presented here are two early Madhyamaka critiques ofthe possibility of any creator god. The first text — *The Refutation of (Ishvara and) Vishnu as the One Creator*— is attributed to Nagarjuna himself, and it may be written by him. It is directed to a general audience and is not as sophisticated as his texts intended for monks and nuns. If it is not composed by him, it probably is by one of his early followers. (The colophon to the text says it is composed by Nagarjuna and written down by one of his students.) It is definitely written before the refinements in Buddhist logic initiated by Dignaga in the early 6thcentury. (The salutation to Vajrasattva in the text's present version may have been added later by Buddhist Tantrikas.) It is not composed in four-line verses, which suggests it was not to be memorized by disciples. Verse numbers have been added here for reference. (The Sanskrit is in Stcherbatsky 1969, as modified in Chemparathy 1968/1969.)

The second text consists of two brief passages from Bhavaviveka's *Verses on the Heart of the Middle Way* (*Madhyamaka-hridaya-karikas*) not included in Volume 1. (The Sanskrit is in Lindtner 2001a and 2001b.)

The Refutation of Vishnu as the One Creator (Vishnor-eka-kartritva-nirakaranam) by Nagarjuna (?)

Opponent : [1] Indeed, the lord Ishvara is the creator. Let him be critically examined. [2] He who creates is a creator. He who performs an action is designated "a creator."

Reply : [3] In this regard, we answer as follows. Does he create something that *exists* or something that *does not exist*? [4] On the one hand, he cannot create what already exists, just as when a person exists there is no creation a second time by a creator who would effect the creation since the individual already exists. [5] On the other hand, if you then say that he creates what is not already existing, we reply that oil created from sand does not exist, the hairs of a turtle do not exist — let Ishvara create those. [6] But he does not have the power to create these things. Why? Becausethey have the nature of not existing. The lord too has that nature.

[7] Now it may be claimed that Ishvara creates whatis now both existing and nonexisting. But this is impossible because of a mutual contradiction: what is existent is in this way existent, and whatis nonexistent is in this way nonexistent. [8] Thus, between these two there is an inevitable contradiction, just as there is between light and dark and between life and death. [9] For where there is light, there is no darkness; and where there is darkness, there is no light (i.e., the two cannot exist together at the same time). [10] So too, one who is alive is indeed alive (and not dead), and one who is dead is indeed dead (and not alive). [11] In the same way, there can be no oneness of the existent and nonexistent, and so Ishvara cannot be a creator (of such a compound) at all.

[12] In addition, there is another objection: does Ishvara create other beings *after* he himself has arisen or *without* having arisen? [13] On the one

hand, he cannot create other beings if he has not himself yet arisen. Why? Because he himself has a nature that is not arisen. [14] Like the son of a barren woman who, being unborn, cannot perform any action such as digging the earth, so is the case also with Ishvara (i.e., what does not exist cannot do anything including create anything).

[15] On the other hand, if Ishvara creates other beings after he has arisen, (then he exists but) from what is he born? Did he arise from himself, from another, or from both? [16] With regard to the first of these options: he cannot have arisen from himself since such action toward oneself is a contradiction. [17] For the blade of sword, no matter how sharp it is, cannot cut itself. Nor can a dancer, no matter how well trained he is, climb onto his own shoulders and dance. [18] How can the same person be both the produced and the producer? That a person is himself his own father and himself his own son — such a saying is not known in the world.

[19] Or assume that Ishvara arises from another being. [20] Even this cannot be the answer since in the absence of Ishvara (as the creator) there would be the nonexistence of anything else. [21] Norcan we assume that he arose (from other things) in succession. If he arose from another in this fashion, an infinite regress would result since thecreator by its nature has no beginning. [22] Where there is the nonexistence of an origin, this nonexistence refutes any end (i.e., refutes any further production). [23]

When there is no seed, any sprout, trunk, branches, leaves, fruits, and so forth are nonexistent. Why? Because of the absence of the seed.

[24] Nor can Ishvara arise from both (himself and other beings) since that would suffer from both of the defects (discussed above).
[25] Thus, a creator (of the world) is shown not to exist.

* * *

Notes

Title . "*Nirakarana*" means "refutation," or more literally, "expelling" or "driving away" or "repudiating." (Sometimes "The Refutation of Ishvara as the Creator" is added at the beginning of the text.) Referring to Vishnu as "one (*eka*) creator" means that he is allegedly the "one and only creator," not "one creator" among many.

Verse 1. The name "Ishvara" is used as the lord, not Vishnu or Shiva. It is a more generic name. (See also Chandrakirti's MA 6.84-86; Pr 1.26, 1.40.)

Verse 1 . Note that the author begins by asking whether *what is created* is real or not, not whether the creator is, as we would in the West. The question in the West is how a timeless god could create what is temporal or intervene in the temporal realm. (See, e.g., Helm 2011.) Some Christian theologians deny the classical claim that God is timeless or claim paradoxically that he is both timeless and temporal or leave the question as a mystery.

Verse 2 . Note that the opponent's claim is that anyone who performs any action (*kriyam karoti*) is designated "a creator." This is not limited to the creation of the world. The Madhyamika also responds to the notion of "creation" in terms more broad than an initial creation of the world alone.

Verse 3 . "*Siddha*/*asiddha*" has been modernized here as "exists/does not exist." More literally, it is something "established." That is, something shown or proven to exist or to not exist. "*Asiddha*" thus is stronger here than merely saying that "a claim may be true but cannot be established." Rather, the opposite of one claim is established. Thus, in verse25 the author is saying that the nonexistence of a creator god is established — not merely that such a god might exist but his existence is not established by the opponent.

Verse 5 . If the creator in fact had the power to create, he could create oil from sand or hairs on a turtle miraculously, but weonly see causal order.
Verses 7-11, 15. Here the author covers only the first three of the famous "four options" — omitting something that is "neither existent nor nonexistent." (See Jones 2010: 155-57.) Nagarjuna often does this (MK 1.7, 2.24-25, 5.6, 8.9-11, 21.13, 23.20; R 37; SS 4, 44; VP 4, 51, 56, 73), as does Chandrakirti (Pr 39).
Verses 16-18. Creation is an action, and the action (*kriya*) that is contradictory is arising from oneself (*svatmani kriya*), not all actions. Nothing can be its own origin or create itself, i.e., be "*self-creating*." This leads to a basic problem for claiming anything can be the source of everything including itself: where did that thing, whatever it is, come from? (Jones 2009: 130-47.)
Verse 21. If Ishvara needed another god to create him, then that god either now stands in the original place of Ishvara as uncreated (as with the prior alternative), or that god too would need another creator and so on and so on since there is no beginning to the eternal universe. That is, either way there is no origin to the universe, not an origin in an infinite past.
Verses 22-23. "*Abhava*" means "absence of an entity" or "nonexistence." (See Jones 2010: 167-68.) The "nonexistence of an origin" means the absence of any "real" (self-existent) thing that is an origin or beginning: if there is nothing real begins, then nothing real follows.

Verses on the Heart of the Middle Way (Madhyamaka-hridaya-karikas) by Bhavaviveka

From Chapter 3

[215] The creator god Ishvara does not create the world from any motive of pleasure whatsoever. Even for those bereft of knowledge, the lord Ishvara is not the creator of pleasure. (Rather, our actions are the cause of all our feelings.) [216] The creation of everything is not by a lord or without a cause (i.e., random chance) or without an origin. The creation of everything is like an undesired flower in appearance. [217] The lord isnot a prior cause of this world in its entirety. The prior cause of the world is not Krishna nor consciousness. [218] Nor is the lord the subtle cause of the development of everything. Nor is the sole cause in any way only Shiva. [219] Yet because of the multitude (of what can be sensed), the senses ofthe lord make him like a slave. Thus, the one eternal lord is not established (as the creator). In fact, it may be the opposite of that. [220] A creator isindeed beloved for all that is produced, the effort, and so forth (and yet Ishvara did not create anything). And a distinction without an observable difference proves only what has already been proven. [221] In addition, a proof does not follow when the distinctiveness is being eternal, one, subtle, and so forth. Nor is the fault cured by being embodied into an impermanent (noneternal) form.

[222] Karmic action is the “lord,” the cause of the diversity in the incalculable worlds that are the receptacles of beings. If so, the existence of the lord is established conventionally (but only conventionally). [223] Because of this, time, the self, unevolved matter, the first human being, or Vishnu is not the cause of this world. Indeed, the claim of a creator is defeated.

. . . [247] From the point of view of ultimate truth, nothing (real) exists by reason of itself or another. Nor does anything (real) arise in any manner from itself, from something else, or from both, [248] nor from Vishnu, Shiva,

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the self, unevolved matter, or anything else. [249] All ideas of dependentarising also are not real. Such ideas are based on the oneness and diversity, and the defilement and purity of actions. [250] Just as the pain from a whipping, a multicolored painting, or a sprout do not spring up in the sky, so all such constructs do not exist (i.e., are not real from the point of view of what in the final analysis is true).

From Chapter 9

[89] Each of the gods claim separately that he alone is the cause of the creation of the world. So whose word here is true and whose is false? This doubt is to be resolved here.

[90] If one claims there is no error because all gods are one, then how indeed can Brahma be the killer of Brahma (rather than of other gods)? But if one denies oneness, then such oneness of all thegods cannot be asserted. [91a] Even if we accept that there is no real (self-existent) differences,

how can the lord be three — Brahma, Vishnu (Krishna), and Shiva?

[91b] And because the gods do not know the cause of suffering, how can they instruct us on how to gain relief from it? [92] Since the teachings of the Vedas, the Yoga school, and so forth are deficient in discussing suffering, they cannot be considered to have the power to protect the Buddhist teaching. [93] In addition, since their own understanding is deficient, they are incapable of leading others to peace (i.e., freedom from suffering). It is as if the guide who has fallen into an abyss were to lead others along the same path.

[94] One must carefully examine the mass of faultyreasoning in the three Vedas that is constructed by faulty arguments and a net of mental constructs. By so examining, the three Vedas are tobe rejected.

[95] I have already shown that the entire world does not have a lord or anything else as its cause (see 3.215-23 above). Even assuming there is such a cause, what exactly has he accomplished? [96] To begin with, it cannot be maintained that the "self" was created by him because it cannot be created at all (since the self is eternal). Nor can it be maintained that he is responsible for proper conduct or misconduct for they have always been his qualities, just as they are today (and so these qualities have existed as long as he has). [97] In addition, the body that perceives pleasure and suffering is produced (through our own actions) by proper conduct and misconduct. Thus, how could the body that living beings possess have possibly been created by the lord? [98] The body that embodied beings possess at the beginning of a new cosmic cycle of time is made by previous but now unseen proper conduct and misconduct. This is so because it is a body that was the cause of the arising of pleasure and suffering, just as with a current body.

[99] If one claims that the lordship of the lord is created by merit, then the lord is not the lord since he depends on merit. [100] If one claims that the lord gains his lordship without a why (i.e., for no reason), then he still has this in common with all other beings. Thus, again the lord is not the lord.

[101] If the lord has the nature of knowledge, then the world created by him must also have the same nature. For an effect must conform to the cause. Thus, the whole world is of the same nature as the lord (but the world clearly does not have the character of knowledge). [102] If the lord is the cause of the world, then the world would have to be subtle and all the other qualities of the lord. Thus, if the world does not possess subtlety and so forth, then God cannot be its cause.

[103] If the lord is the maker of karma (i.e., is responsible for karmic actions having their effects), then he himself would also have to burn in the hells. However, if it is beings other than himselfwho have to burn in the hells, then completed actions are lost and no effects follow. [104] In addition, if the cause of suffering is permanent, then how can suffering be pacified (i.e., ended permanently)? Obviously, as long as a fire is burning, its heat is not exhausted.

[105] Moreover, if the lord is one and not diverse, how can he be the cause of a diversity of effects? (From verse 101: an effect must have the same nature as its cause.) Nor can the diversity possibly be the result of diverse desires and so forth if the lord is one. [106] Assuredly, if the cause of the world is permanent (eternal), without parts, and subtle, how can it be "one" and "existing throughout everything (i.e., omnipresent)"?

[107] If his purpose for creating is allegedly play, then assuredly its fruit is pleasure. But since pleasure depends only on itself, the lord is not lord (since he is not its cause). [108-109] But instead, homage to Rudra (the "terrible one") whose name denotes his nature — for he delights in luckless animals that live in fear of being eaten by other animals, in those who dwell in the hells and are tortured by being beaten, cut, burned, and so forth, and in human beings who are plagued by rebirth, disease, old age, fear, suffering, and exhaustion. [110] It is perceived that it is the doing of the lord that some wretched people are rich, that it is the condition of some virtuous people that they must live off others, and that unvirtuous people are reborn in heaven. [111] It is perceived that it is the doing of the lord that some people rich in the qualities of proper conduct live short lives, that the unvirtuous live long lives, and that the generous have little wealth. [112] Some Buddhists indeed are happy, but why do some devotees suffer? Why do some people partaking in merit and acting with the knowledge of the lord not produce demerit? [113a] To those who do not understand diversity and action (karma), it is declared that karma itself is the cause.

[113b] Thus, the claim that Brahma or Krishna is the creator of the world is answered.
Opponent: [114] Having closed the door of the mind [to the external world], the yogin focuses his mind on Shiva. He then meditates on the syllable "Om" while fixing his concentration in hisheart. [115] When one has thereby concentrated one's mind by diligently keeping it concentrated on the earth and so forth, one becomes free of suffering when the Lord is clearly seen.
Reply: [116] As long as there is the arising of mental cognitions (of objects), liberation cannot be attained. Nor can liberation be attained before a mental cogniton arises. [117] It is not possiblefor devotees of the Lord to become liberated by seeing Shiva, since then their mind is fixed on an object just as when they see an image (and thus their mindis not empty of content, as is necessary for liberation).
[118] In addition, if the Lord is the cause of suffering, then suffering could not be eradicated because it would be permanent (because it would be real and thus unendable since it would be created by a real entity). Thus, it is not possible for any devotee of the Lord to attain the end of suffering by seeing the Lord.
[119] Thus, the remaining advocates of Brahma, Vishnu, and the self are refuted. And thus it is not acceptable to take any mental pleasure in the Lord and so forth.

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Notes

Verses 3.194-214 . The passage translated here is preceded by a discussion of *karma* (i.e., action and its consequences). Bhavaviveka argues there that everything in this world is determined by cause and effect, and thus the passage here begins by asserting that there is no place for a god as the creator of the world.

Verse 3.216. *Dependent-arising* is the cause of creation, not a god.

Verse 3.217 . "*Karanam param*" means a "prior" or "distant" or "ultimate" cause, or simply "another" cause.
Verse 3.220. "*Karta*" means "distinction." It can also mean "creator." This may be an attempt at humor.
Verse 3.223, 248. "*Purusha*" is either the self or the primal person of *Rig Veda* 10.90. "*Pradhana*"is unevolved matter; it is usually translated as the "primal atom." "*Para-manava*" is the "most distant" or "first" man.
Verse 3.247. "*Paramartha*" is what is ultimately real or ultimately true, i.e., what from the correct metaphysical point of view is real/true. Notice that Bhavaviveka refers to the three options here, as did the author of *The Refutation of Vishnu as the One Creator*, verses 7-11 and 15.
Verse 9.91. "*Ishana*" is the "ruler, lord, master." This is an old title principally for Shiva. In verse 99, the name "Isvara" is used for the lord, as in *The Refutation of Vishnu as the One Creator*.
Verse 9.91b. Bhavaviveka is asserting that the alleged lord of the universe *does not know the cause of suffering* — thus, the lord is not omniscient. Nor is he the creator of suffering: if the god were thecause of suffering, he would know it. The gods are as trapped in the cycle of rebirth and are no more creators than any other beings. And since the concern of suffering is the central Buddhist concern, the god is irrelevant to the quest for enlightenment (as continued in verses 92-94).
Verse 9.94. "*Kalpanas*" refers to the false constructs created by discriminating (*vikalpa*) discrete entities and thus is connected to conceptual projection (*prapancha*).
Verse 9.95. "*Vishva*" means "the entire world, all that is, everything."
Verse 9.96. "*Dharma*" means "proper conduct" (i.e., following the prescribed social roles of conduct), and "*adharma*" means "misconduct."
Verse 9.97. "*Kalpa*"means the cosmic time-periods of the "rolling" in and out of Brahman.
Verse 9.101a. "*Jna*" means "knowledge, intelligence, the capacity to know."
Verse 9.101b. "*Cetana*" can mean "consciousness, sentience or thought" or it can mean "excellent." Here it means whatever is the nature of Ishvara.
Verse 9.106. "*An-avayana*" ("without parts") more literally means to be without members or limbs.
Verse 9.107. "*Krida*" is "playing, sport, amusement." That is, the alleged purpose of creation is nothing other than recreation, not concern for the beings to be created or anything more serious than play. This is also alleged in Advaita Vedanta where it is claimed that Brahman creates because that is simply what it does, like we breathe.
Verses 9.114-17. That is, even if a creator god does exist, meditating on him (referring to here as Shiva and the Lord) cannot bring an end to suffering. As long as the mind is fixed on an image (e.g., Shiva or *om*), the mind is fixed and cannot be liberated.
Verse 9.118. In Madhyamaka metaphysics, a product of something selfexistent would share its nature and be real, but nothing *produced* is real, and so anything produced by something self-existent cannot

be in fact be real (i.e., self-existent, eternal, and permanent).

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II. Commentaries Chandrakirti's Innovations

Is Chandrakirti a Reliable Guide to Nagarjuna?

The first point to note about Chandrakirti is that he was an innovator and represents one interpretation of Nagarjuna's thought. Since Chandrakirti so influenced Tibetan thought and Tibetan thought today is so influential in understanding Indian Buddhism, in the modern West Nagarjuna ends up being understood through the lens of Chandrakirti's thought. But Chandrakirti significantly alters Nagarjuna's thought on some important points including emptiness and Madhyamaka reasoning (see, e.g., Shulman 2010.) Consider motion in MK 2: Nagarjuna presents problems in terms of the *person in motion*(Jones 2010: 4-6), but Chandrakirti in his commentary changes this to the *space moved across* — something that obviously does not move at all and alters the problems Nagarjuna points out. Other examples are noted below and in the Notes.

Douglas Berger describes Chandrakirti's commentary as"idiosyncratic" (2010: 40). At a minimum, it should be remembered that Chandrakirti appeared four or five centuries after Nagarjuna and that there had been epistemic developments in Buddhism in the interim. Overall, Chandrakirti must be seen as one interpreter of Nagarjuna in disputes with other interpreters, not as uncovering the obviously "true" meaning of Nagarjuna.

Chandrakirti and Bhavaviveka

A major portion of Chandrakirti's main work, the *Clearly-worded Commentary*, is a defense of Buddhapalita's positions against the objections raised by Bhavaviveka. However, this does not mean that he saw himself as creating a new branch of the Madhyamaka tradition — the "Prasangikas" in opposition to Bhava-viveka's "Svatantrikas." There was no schism at least in India. (See Dreyfus & McClintock 2003 for discussions of the philosophical and historical questions concerning the distinction.) The term "Prasangika" was only introduced in Tibet in the eleventh century and translated into Sanskrit from the Tibetan. Shantideva probably did not think of himself as a

"Prasangika" either — he does not indicate in any way that he thought that the Madhyamikas were divided into two branches. Nor does he quote Chandrakirti as an authority or even mention him. Indeed, Bhavaviveka had more influence in Indian Buddhism than Chandrakirti. Even the great fourteenth century Tibetan Buddhist Tsong kha pa adopted much of Bhavaviveka's logical "modernization" of Madhyamaka Buddhism that he had developed by importing the logical refinement of the Buddhist logician Dignaga (fl. ca. 500 CE).

But Chandrakirti rejects Bhavaviveka's new approach. Bhavaviveka thinks that the only way to defeat non-Madhyamikas is to advance independent supportive arguments (*svatantrika-anumana*) for emptiness providing a reason and example, and not merely expose alleged problems with the opponent's beliefs (see Jones 2011: 199-203). In debates with non-Madhyamikas to whom the self-existence of entities is imputed, Bhavaviveka advances positive claims to make explicit what

Madhyamikas believe that opponents may accept or refute. He also adopts the form of argument that other schools accept in order to show on their own terms that positive arguments can be made for the ultimate truth of emptiness. One of Dignaga's stipulations is that only if both parties agree tothe premises can the debate proceed (see Pr 34-35) — if a premise is admitted by only one party, it is inherently open to doubt. Agreement also avoids any need to analyze the presuppositions of one party's approach.

Chandrakirti rejects Bhavaviveka's approach because it makes the Madhyamaka ontological claim that all "basic phenomena of the experienced world (*dharmas*)" are empty of self-existence into a thesis (*pratijna*) and thus a target of refutation that must be positively defended. (But Chandrakirti, unlike Nagarjuna, does use the word *proposition* [*paksha*][e.g., Pr 501] for Madhyamaka claims.) So too, the stipulation of agreement is not acceptable for the reasons in the arguments when it comes to the ultimate ontological status of things: the opponents would misunderstand any Madhyamaka reasons as indicating self-existent entities. In effect, using "emptiness" as a reason makes it a conventional entity. Bhavaviveka's approach also explicitly goes against Nagarjuna's approach that he advances no thesis (VV 29-30), as Bhavaviveka himself acknowledges, even though he thinks positive arguments are entailed by Nagarjuna's claims and that as a commentator he can provide them. Chandrakirti obviously argues extensively, and he does not reject inferences and syllogisms *per se* — he employs both three-member and five-member syllogisms himself to establish, for example, the existence of fire from the existence of smoke (e.g., Pr 20, 34; see Pr 34 on MK 3.2). (Nagarjuna employs neither.) But he argues that this form of argument should be used only for "conventional truths" while Bhavaviveka thinks it can be used to establish the "ultimate truth" that ontologically all phenomena are empty of anything that would give them an independent existence — i.e., positive arguments can be made "from the ultimate point of view" or "in ultimate matters (*parama-artha-tas*)."

Chandrakirti thinks first that Bhavaviveka gives conventional entities too much reality. Not all Buddhists and non-Buddhists accept the doctrine of two types of truth, and thus by Bhavaviveka accepting entities conventionally opponents may be led to claim that Madhyamikasaccept entities as real. At a minimum, Bhavaviveka must accept the opponents' premise in some sense for an argument to proceed, and accepting theopponent's premises at least gives the impression that Madhyamikas accept conventional entities as being something real (i.e., self-existent) to be negated. Whether Chandrakirti accepts entities even conventionally is not always clear since according to him, as noted below, the enlightened do not see conventional entities. For example, he denies a transcendental self such as the Samkhya accept as even conventionally real (MA 6.122) but seems to accept a conventional self connected to the bodily aggregates (MA 6.124). However, he treats the idea of a "conventional self" as at most a convenient label for a stream of connected parts with the "self's" parts doing the causal work, while Bhavaviveka treats the "self" as an impermanent but conventionally real entity (as does Shantideva). Thus, for the latter, there is a "conventional self" to negate but none for the former. Thus, according to Chandrakirti, the qualification "from the ultimate point of view" is not needed even for negating conventional entities (Pr 26).

Second, for Chandrakirti the ontological truth of emptiness cannot be described in any positive way or supported by reasons since claims and reasons must be stated in conventional terms. Indeed, as discussed below, Chandrakirti does not think any ultimate truths can be stated. So too, any

conventional valid means to knowledge (*pramana*) cannot establish the truth of emptiness (although scriptural authority is a valid means of knowledge for leading the unenlightened to nirvana [Pr 268]). Nor can there be any agreement on premises with the Madhyamikas' opponents because of their acceptance of self-existent subjects and objects. Rather, for him the only way to establish emptiness is to take the opponents' premises and rules of reasoning and show how they lead to contradictions as their consequences (*prasanga*) and thus are not acceptable — in short, every attempt to comprehend anything in the world that presupposes self-existence ends up being self-contradictory. Emptiness is thereby established by default. (On this reductio method in Nagarjuna's thought, see Jones 2010: 157-59.) This approach also avoids the problem that negating the premise suggests it is real — i.e., only something real can be negated. It also circumvents the problem that if debaters do not share a common understanding of the premises and reasons then each side means different things by the key terms, and so they are talking past each other and thus neither side can really be refuted.

Third, according to Chandrakirti, Madhyamikas should have no positive thesis about emptiness but only negate the opponents' theses in a way that does not affirm any counterclaim (see Pr 24-25). Bhavaviveka believes that in the *reductio ad absurdum* method, the negation of a proposition implicitly affirms the opposite proposition. (On the two types of negation, see Jones 2011: 203-205 and Harris 1991: 36-38.) (Whether Chandrakirti ascribes questionable beliefs to his opponents or whether in general he reasons validly to his conclusions from those premises will not be addressed here.)

The problem here then is over the ontological nature of the entities in the premises and reasons, not the process of inference. The basic rules of logic are upheld (e.g., the laws of the excluded middle and non-contradiction). Nor do Nagarjuna or Chandrakirti ever attack the *reductio ad absurdum* method itself as ultimately false. Nor do they accept logical contradictions as ever being capable of stating truths (contra Garfield & Priest 2003). If they did accept contradictions in general as possibly true, then the reductio method for destroying their opponents' claims is rendered groundless since then the mere fact that a contradiction results would not invalidate the opponent's position; and if they accept some contradictions as stating truths, they would have had to explain at some point why the contradictions brought out by the reductio method do not fall into that class, but they never do.

Chandrakirti and Dignaga

In addition to rejecting Bhavaviveka's approach, Chandrakirti argues in the *Clearly-worded Commentary* against the epistemic foundationalism of the logician Dignaga (Pr 59-75). (But the logicians ended up having more influence within Indian Buddhism.) For establishing claims about the everyday world, Dignaga advances two valid means of knowledge: direct perception (*pratyaksha*) for seeing the own-characteristics (*sva-lakshanas*) unique to an entity, and inference (*anumana*) for establishing an entity's general characteristics (*samanya-lakshanas*). Direct perception provides a foundation for valid knowledge because it is unaffected by any conceptualizations (*kalpana-apodha*) and sees the bare characteristics of things directly without any possibility of error. Bhavaviveka follows him on these points.

Chandrakirti accepts these two valid means of knowledge and adds two more: scriptural authority (*agama*) and analogy (*upamana*). (That he accepts scriptural authority as a valid means of knowledge

[Pr 268-69; e.g., MA 6.135] should be noted since many see the Madhyamikas as relying solely on the reductio method. Even Nagarjuna relies on scriptural authority for support in his most important work [e.g., MK 15.7; see Pr 42-43].) But he accepts all these means only conventionally (Pr 55-75; MA 6.25): ultimately, like everything else, they are empty of anything giving themself-existence and thus none are ultimately real. If nothing else, the valid means of knowledge are interdependent with the valid objects of knowledge (*prameyas*) and so are not independently real. Chandrakirti also rejected the claim that direct perception in general is free of error: the sense-perception of the unenlightened is still conceptualized through the idea of self-existence and thus flawed; only the sense-perception of the enlightenedis truly seeing the world as it really is (see MA 6.28-31). The same applies to mental objects. This led to the charge that since direct perception is not accepted as ultimately real that it cannot be used at all — even merely to verify change — and thus that Madhyamikas have no empirical means to refute their opponents' claims to self-existence. Nagarjuna's *Overturning the Objections* attempts to refute this objection, and Chandrakirti follows him here.

Self-Nature Versus Self-Existence

" *Svabhava*" in Madhyamaka thought means "*self-existence*." That is, the power of a phenomenon to exist comes only from the phenomenon itself and thus it exists without dependence on anything else. Only what is self-existent is real in the final analysis. Unlike for the Abhidharmists, to Madhyamikas the basic phenomena of the experienced world (*dharmas*) are not "*real*" (i.e., *self-existent*) but are dependent upon causes and conditions. And unlike for the Yogacharins, there is something external, not merely the projections of the mind, and the mind is as impermanent and "unreal" as the components of the external world. Even what is unconditioned (e.g., space) is subject to the "four options" that show that the concepts "existent (real)" and "nonexistent (unreal)" do not apply (see Jones 2010: 155-58). Madhyamaka arguments attempt to show that any view that involves self-existence leads to a world of distinct, permanent entities in which nothing can change or interact — only if phenomena are empty of self-existence can anything change or can causation or anything else work. So too, nothing real ceases in nirvana, and nirvana itself is not a real (self-existent) state. The same applies to emptiness (see the Note on MA 6.186). Basically, Madhyamikas see their opponents trapped in a Catch-22-type dilemma: only what is real can arise (or change or cease), but what exists by self-existence cannot arise (or change or cease) — in short, to exist something must arise, but what exists by self-existence cannot arise.

Chapter 15 of the *Clearly-worded Commentary* is about *svabhava*. Usually the term is used in its technical, philosophical sense of "self-existence." However, Chandrakirti sometimes uses the term to mean simply "ownnature" in the everyday sense of "the nature of something" without any metaphysical implications. In those instances, it is translated here as "*selfnature*" (see also MA 6.221). (Also see Huntington 1983 and Westerhoff 2007: 33-34.) For example, it would make no sense to say that heat is the selfexistence of fire (Pr 241), but heat is its self-nature — i.e., fire could not exist without heat. Nagarjuna rarely uses*svabhava* to mean self-nature, and never says as Chandrakirti does that, for example, to argue that heat is the "selfnature" of fire while the heat in water is contingent upon other conditions (Pr 241). Chandrakirti says the true nature (*dharmata*) of the basic phenomena of the experienced world is *svabhava* (Pr 264). If "*svabhava*" here means "selfexistence" rather than "self-nature," then Chandrakirti is ultimately advocating the view of self-

existence. William Ames (1982) asserts that Chandrakirti in fact does so in a third usage for "*svabhava*": what is truly real (*tattva*) is "*true self-existence*." If Chandrakirti does this, he would again be going beyond Nagarjuna. However, this would involve seeing what is real in terms of *self-existence* — something that Madhyamikas resist.

Also what Chandrakirti says about *tattva* can be explained with only two senses of *svabhava*. If Sanskrit had capitals, the philosophical use would be "*Svabhava*" and the everyday use as "self-nature" would be "*svabhava*." Chandrakirti apparently uses "own-form (*sva-rupa*)" as a synonym of either sense of "*svabhava*." A "self-nature" is not dependent upon anything else (Pr 241), but it is not *self-existent* since all entities arise dependently (Pr 87). Thus, each type of entity has a conventional self-nature that is distinct from that of other entities, but entities and their self-nature nevertheless are not ontologically self-existent. The unenlightened superimpose self-existence onto entities that are actually selfless (Pr 58). But Chandrakirti says that the enlightened also see a self-nature to what is truly real (*tattva*): the self-nature (*svabhava*) of what is in fact real is to be free of self-existence (*Svabhava*). This does *not* equate *self-existence* (*Svabhava*) with reality as it truly is (*tattva*) or reality from the ultimate point of view (*paramartha*). Rather, reality as it truly is indeed has a self-nature (*svabhava*) — being free of any self-existence (*Svabhava*). In short, selflessness is the ultimate self-nature of what is actually real. That is the true nature (*dharmata*) of reality. But we should not confuse Chandrakirti's two uses and refer to what is real (*tattva*) as *self-existent* simply because reality has a self-nature.

To Chandrakirti, entities (*bhavas*) are not even conventionally real since they are devoid of self-existence and self-existent self-natures, and so there is nothing to negate. That is, even the self-nature of anything is itself dependent upon causes and conditions, and so there is no self-nature (*svabhava*) or self-existence (*Svabhava*) either conventionally or from the ultimate point of view. The true self-nature of things is the never changing, always-abiding "thus-ness" or "such-ness" (*tathata*) of being free of selfexistence and thus dependent and impermanent (Pr 265). (That the *nature* of reality [*dharmata*] never changes and thus is eternal does not conflict with the claim that *what is real* is itself constantly changing; so too, the fixed order of karmic causes and effects or of acorns leading to oak trees and not palm trees may be permanent even though what is subject to such lawful order constantly changes.) *Svabhava* in the sense of "self-nature" is closely related to "defining-characteristics (*sva-lakshanas*)," the "marks" that separate one thing from another. Defining-characteristics and what is characterized are mutually dependent and thus not independently real (Pr 527). Here Chandrakirti sees his position as significantly different from Bhavaviveka's: Bhavaviveka accepts self-characteristics as conventionally real and as directly seen by nondefective consciousness. Chandrakirti, however, as noted above, declares that all nonenlightened sense-experience does not see reality as it truly is.

It should also be pointed out that Chandrakirti's uses of " *svabhava*" in two senses leads to an ambiguity in his argument against real entities in Chapter 15 of the *Clearly-worded Commentary*. For example, he shifts from "self-nature" to "self-existence" in Pr 261, leading to the idea of "self-existent natures." The conclusion cannot be logically reached because this switch in meaning in the middle of the argument (the fallacy of equivocation). Richard Hayes (1994) ascribes this illegitimate move to Nagarjuna and in fact makes it central to what Richard Robinson (1968) calls Nagarjuna's "shell game." But Nagarjuna focuses only on self-existence, not self-nature, and Chandrakirti changes

the sense of MK 15 here. (However, whether Nagarjuna's arguments have other problems is another issue. See Jones 2010: 160-64.)

Language and the Ultimate Point of View

Madhyamikas make the doctrine of "two types of truth" a cornerstone for understanding the Buddha's teachings, and Chandrakirti utilizes the distinction throughout his works. Conventional truths (*samvriti*) "cover" the true ontological status of things: ultimately, there are no entities. But Chandrakirti accepts the customary truths of the world because the world accepts them (e.g., Pr 69), although he denies the self-existence that the worldly mistakenly accept. Since there is no self-existence, conventional truths about "entities" have an element that will mislead the unenlightened. Nevertheless, conventional truths remain truths even though they do not convey ultimate ontological matters. That is, conventional notions can still convey some true information about the world even though there are no "real" distinct entities — calling a tree a "*tree*" and not a "*car*" conveys accurate information even though both share the same nature of being empty of self-existence. All entities bear this dual nature of being empty of selfexistence and having conventional distinctions, eventhough ordinary senseperception is flawed (MA 6.23) by the notion of self-existence.

However, Chandrakirti differs from Nagarjuna and Bhavaviveka on the nature of the "ultimate truth (*parama-artha-satya*)," i.e., the truths of the highest meaning on ontological matters. Argument and statements cannot take the place of an experience of seeing the ultimate truth of things, and realizing ultimate truths is a nonlinguistic event, but Nagarjuna accepts that realizing ultimate truths is a nonlinguistic event, but Nagarjuna accepts that 53). There is nothing in his works that suggests that, for example, "All entities are empty of self-existence" would not be an ultimate truth. "Reality as it truly is (*tattva*)" is described in MK 18 negatively as not dependent, empty of selfexistence, unarisen, unceasing, and free of multiple entities and thus free of the possibility of conceptual projection; but it is also described positively: all its content is dependently arisen. Nagarjuna says: "Without relying upon worldly convention, the truth from the highest point of view cannot be taught. And without reaching the truth from the highest point of view, nirvana cannot be achieved (MK 24.10)." Granted, this does not explicitly say that ultimate truths can be stated, but it does say that ultimate truths can be taught and it does distinguish the teaching of ultimate truths from the realization of nirvana — how could an ultimate truth be taught or even understood without being statable in language, and what would be the difference between learning the truth and realizing nirvana? And even if becoming enlightened is an extralinguistic event, nothing in what Nagarjuna states suggests that the enlightened are incapable of stating ultimate truths.

Bhavaviveka accepts some ultimate truths as statable and some as not (MAS 4-6; see Jones 2011: 196). But Chandrakirti goes further and accepts that no ultimate truth is statable. It is not merely that there are no real entities, no nuggets of reality, for words to refer to — thus, since reality as it truly is has no distinct entities while all words are discrete,Madhyamikas reject "linguistic realism" (i.e., that language mirrors the true content of reality). Rather, for Chandrakirti, just as unenlightened sense-perception is always flawed because the notion of self-existent entities operates within it, so too language is also always flawed and cannot reflect thenondual nature of reality as it truly is (*tattva*). Any object of thought is rejected as nonexistent. (Of course, the laws of logic are also potential objects of thought, and if they are rejected then the Madhyamaka reductio method is destroyed.) The

defining-characteristic of consciousness (*vijnana*) is an awareness of distinct objects (MA 6.203). Thus, reality as it truly is — free of distinct entities — cannot be presented to dualizing consciousness, and language operates only in dualizing consciousness. Indeed, any language by its very nature makes distinctions. That the enlightened still directly realize "reality as it truly is" in some sense leads to Chandrakirti having to say that the enlightened are not *conscious* at all — consciousness (*vijnana*) is not any aware mental state but "conceptualizing awareness," i.e., awareness of differentiated phenomena guided by our conceptions. So too, when the enlightened speak they cannot be in an enlightened state. In sum, reality as it truly is is ineffable because it has no distinctions to be captured in language.

Thus, Chandrakirti changes the situation: even the enlightened cannot speak ultimate truths. The conventional is inherently incapable of stating ultimate truths, and all language is inherently conventional. All that the Buddha spoke is relegated to only conventional truths — the Buddha never said anything that is ultimately true. Texts that speak of emptiness are final, not provisional, in their meaning (MA 6.97), but their truths are still only conventional. Dependent-arising and "All things arise dependently and are empty of self-existence" are only conventional truths. The very idea of "emptiness" is simply another part of conventionality. But again, these are truths: that things are connected as dependent-arising depicts and are empty is *true* and not false — Chandrakirti does still distinguish truth and falsity on the conventional level and what leads to enlightenment and what does not (e.g., MA 6.24). So too, the dichotomy of two types of truth is a conventional truth; ultimately, there are no dichotomies in reality. Nothing spoken can reflect reality as its really is: anything spoken will inherently involve distinctions and dualities and cannot reflect the nondual nature of reality as it really is since it is free of distinctions. But even that is only a conventional truth. Even speaking "the true status of things" is only a conventional matter.

Silence

Thus, for Chandrakirti only silence reflects the ultimate truth (Pr 57). Ultimate truth is beyond words and not an object of consciousness (*vijnana*) (Pr 109). Bhavaviveka agrees that when wisdom (*prajna*) arises words stop: "Words stop here. This is not the domain of thought. Conceptualizing turns back, and the silence of wisdom arises (MHK 3.277)." But Bhavaviveka still believes that there are statable ultimate truths (MAS 4-6) — it is *the projection of concepts* (*prapancha*) onto what is actually real that is ended in ultimate truth (MAS 5), not language. So too, nothing in Nagarjuna's works suggests that the enlightened are reduced to silence: there may be no selfexistent referents to language, but the enlightened can employ language in the conventional world to teach ultimate truths (see Jones 2010: 150). Nor does Nagarjuna suggest, contra Chandrakirti, that thedistinction of the two truths is only a conventional distinction.

However, Chandrakirti's position on the lack of differentiated perception in the enlightened state and on the lack of conventional differentiated entities forces him to the extreme position that the enlightened are silent: the enlightened do not see differentiations in the phenomenal world (e.g., MA 6.53, 91) and thus have nothing to speak. The more usual Buddhist position is that the enlightened still have sense-perceptions but that they do not see the panorama presented to them as divided into discrete entities and that the enlightened can use conventions (*vyavaharas*) without being deceived about the ontological status of the entities referred to. Rather, the experienced differentiations are

simply no longer taken as indicating distinct self-existent entities. And thereby speech remains possible. The enlightened no longer project conceptual distinctions (*prapancha*) onto what is really there (see Pr 521-22), which would create a world of discrete self-existent objects, and they no longer have the dichotomizing conceptualizations (*kalpana*) that supports this projection (Pr 522), but they are still capable of utilizing those distinctions. In short, they can use the words without seeing or conceiving independent entities. The title of the Buddha as "the silent one of the Shakya clan (*shakya-muni*)" is taken to mean that the Buddha did not speak any real (self-existent) truths or teachings, not that he was literally silent. But for Chandrakirti, the Buddha is "mindless" and can say nothing because he sees no differentiations in the phenomenal world to speak about since all objects and change are reduced to illusions (Pr 538). (The enlightened do *see* phenomenal reality as it really is, but not with conceptualizing consciousness [*vijnana*], and so to Chandrakirti, they do not *see*.) Thus, Chandrakirti has the problem of explaining how the Buddha spoke at all, or had such copious sermons, even if he conveyed only conventional truths.

Most Madhyamikas would agree that realizing emptiness involves more than philosophical analysis — another state of consciousness than conceptualizing awareness is required. Simply understanding the claim that all of the phenomenal world is empty of any self-existence isnot enough to end the root-ignorance (*avidya*) underlying the desires that propel the cycle of rebirths — a meditation-supported mindfulness experience of the true nature of reality is needed. (See Jones 2010: 143-45.) The yogin's knowledge of reality (*jnana*) is perfected by wisdom (*prajna*, "insight" or "discernment").

But for Chandrakirti reality as it truly is (*tattva*) cannot be apprehended by ordinary cognition since there are no features to grasp. Wisdom is not based on conceptualized discursive perceptions or inferences: there are no differentiated objects to know. Thus, there are no "valid objects of knowledge" for wisdom to distinguish, and the accepted conventional "valid means of knowledge" do not apply to realizing reality as it truly is. Again, the Buddha was silent: since reality as it truly is is free of distinct real entities, there is nothing to express. Thus, it is inexpressible (*avachyataavachyata* 48; Pr 64, 539) since there are no distinct realities to be reflected in words. So too, how the enlightened exist in this life is beyond our understanding and conception (Pr 535). This also means questions about the limits of the universe are unanswerable (Pr 537) since there are no real limits, and so on.

Any metaphysical views (*drishtis*) or theses (*pratijnas*) involving selfexistence are ended by seeing the emptiness of things. Thereby, we see reality free of such preconceptions. (But Chandrakirti uses another word from the same root as "*drishti*" — "*darshana*, 'seeing,' 'doctrine'" — positively in connection with emptiness.) Thus, to be enlightened is to be free of all views since any view involves accepting the reality of independent, self-existent entities in some form. This involves relinquishing all conceptual frameworks for enlightenment, although there is nothing in Chandrakirti's work to suggest that he sees all *language* creating a *view*. To see reality *as* "empty" or *as* "real" or *as* "midway between the categories of 'is' and 'is not'" or *as* "selfexistent" in some new sense still involves seeing reality through the concepts of "exist" and "not exist."

However, even if there are no differentiations in the "thus-ness" of "reality as it truly is" and so language cannot reflect anything about the true status of things, Chandrakirti can still affirm a reality external to our mental constructions open to the direct experience by the enlightened. For example, he

utilizes the snake/rope analogy (MA 6.141, Pr 523), and this makes sense only if there is some actual *reality* that is being misperceived. Similarly, the analogies to illusions, mirages, reflections, and dreams (e.g., MA 6.26) are used only to show the*deceptiveness* and *dependence* of something false upon some real causes and conditions (MA 6.37) — the analogies would make no sense if there were no underlying reality. Reality as it truly is (*tattva*) — the "rope" beneath all illusions — is phenomenal reality perceived correctly. (Note that in Madhyamaka metaphysics *tattva* is not an "Ultimate Reality" transcending the phenomenal world.) And the appearances remain even for the enlightened, although the enlightened would not be deceived. That is, the content of an illusion does not exist even conventionally, but a mirage or dream itself does exist conventionally — although it too is dependent upon terms and conditions. But why even these appearances should remain for the enlightened is not clear in Chandrakirti's account of the enlightened state. So too, things are empty of self-existence but not totally nonexistent (*asat*), like the son of a barren woman or a rabbit's horns — saying what is dependently arisen is *nonexistent* is the view of annihilationism (*ucchedavada*), and all Madhyamikas reject that as connected to the notion of self-existence. This applies to anything in the phenomenal world: anything capable of performing a function is not nonexistent. Thus, water and a mirage are both "unreal (non-self-existent)" in the technical, Madhyamaka sense, but water is "real" in an everyday sense in a way that a mirage is not — in short, real water is not a mirage. Such a stance is sufficiently objective to counter the claim that Madhyamikas are ontological nihilists, despite Chandrakirti's problem of denying conventional "selves" and other "entities." Conventional truths are "covering truths," but they are covering an extralinguistic, objective reality.

Dependent Designation

Also with regard to language, Chandrakirti changes Nagarjuna's original use of "dependent designation (*upadaya-prajnapti*)." Buddhapalita, who Chandrakirti defends, began this change. (See Jones 2011: 188-89.) Nagarjuna equates "emptiness" with "dependent-arising (*pratitya-samutpada*)" and says that this indicator (*prajnapti*) is dependent (*upadaya*) and that comprehending this is the "middle way" (MK 24.18). He also says: "'Empty,' 'not empty,' 'both (empty and not empty),' or 'neither (empty nor not empty)' — these should not be said, but they are said only as indicators (MK 22.11)." However, Nagarjuna does not use "dependent designation"to suggest that dependent-arising is *a name only* — "emptiness" indicates dependent-arising, and there is no suggestion that dependent-arising is only a customary conceptual construct rather than a reflection of reality as it truly works. In effect, "emptiness" is simply a synonym for another word. So too, for example, the "end of the cycle of rebirths" must be real in some sense or there is no point to the Buddhist way of life or teachings.But Chandrakirti alters the notion of "dependent designation" to mean that designations for all "entities" are no more than convenient labels (e.g., MA 6.158) — e.g., there is no "person" but only the aggregates or no "chariot" but only its parts and its parts' parts. The term "dependent-arising" has nothing to refer to in reality.

Only with Chandrakirti did the idea of "dependent designation" come to mean that words do not refer to any reality but are merely social conventions. Most people would agree that any word is arbitrary in one sense (there is no inherent connection between the sign "car" and a car), but they accept that these help us navigate the world because they refer to the world in some way. Chandrakirti, however, removes anything to refer to: the moon is not an impermanent entity — there is no moon to point to

with words. All form and so forth are only products of our conceptual consciousness. In sum, the switch is from Nagarjuna's semantic claim to an ontological one.

This ties up to Chandrakirti's emphasis on silence. His interpretation of "dependent designation" means that language only leads us to social conventions, not to reality. Words do not refer to anything in the world, and we are reduced to silence once we see the world correctly. Even on a conventional level, Chandrakirti has the problem of explaining why some sentences rather than others can say something that is more accurate about the world or are "better" or "more effective" in any sense or how any verbal "skillful means (*upaya*)" can help lead the unenlightened to nirvana.

Chandrakirti's "Paradoxes"

Chandrakirti enjoys speaking in one type of paradox: *x* is not *x*. (Technically, this is simply a *contradiction — paradoxes* involve statements that are *true* if *false*. But the label "paradox" has been expanded today in common parlance to encompass more.) For example, "The eye is empty of an eye (MA 6.181)," "The self-nature of what is truly real is to have no selfnature," "The defining-characteristic of reality as it truly is is that it has no defining-characteristic," "The Buddha taught that nirvana is no nirvana (Pr 540)," or "Seeing is non-seeing (Pr 351)." They are on the order of the proper paradox "The ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth." However, this literary device makes the claims sound more confusing than they really are. Thus, the above claims can all be restated clearly:"The conventional eye is empty of a self-existent eye," "The nature (*dharmata*) of reality as is truly is is to be free of self-existence (*Svabhava*) and any self-existent self-nature (*svabhava*)," "Reality as it truly is has no distinct attributes and so has no defining-characteristic," "The Buddha taught that nirvana is not a real entity," "The correct seeing of reality in the mindful state involves no conceptualized awareness," and "The ultimate truth is that there are no self-existent truths."

Misunderstandings by translators may cause paradoxes to appear where there are none. For example, Jay Garfield and Graham Priest (2003) make this paradox: ultimate truths are about ultimate reality; but since everything is empty, there is no ultimate reality; thus, the ultimate truth is that there are no ultimate truths. However, there is an "ultimate reality": reality as it truly is — *tattva*, the "that-ness" of things. Reality as it truly is is not an "entity" and does not "exist" in the technical Madhyamaka sense since it is not selfexistent, but it is the "rope" underneath our misperceptions, and to Nagarjuna and Bhavaviveka some ultimate truths are statable about it: it is free of self-existence, all its content is dependently arisen, and so on. There is no paradox in this account.

Nor is the literary device of paradox necessary to Madhyamaka discourse since Nagarjuna and the others do not engage in it. (If Chandrakirti does ascribe *self-existence* to what is in fact real [*tattva*] in Pr 108, then this is a more substantial variation from Nagarjuna than merely a new literary device.) And even Chandrakirti gives non-contradictory explanations of Nagarjuna's verses that may seem paradoxical. For example, the "real" and "unreal" of MK 18.8 is explained in terms of different teachings being given to different followers according to their development.

The important philosophical point for understanding these "paradoxical" claims remains that their content can be restated free of contradictions. The paradoxical way of putting matters makes reality as

it truly is sound paradoxical, even though nothing in Madhymaka metaphysics suggests that. It also makes the listeners focus on *the form of the statement*. This may have soteriological advantages as with the Zen koans, but it may also cause the listener to focus on the statement and not the point that is being made, thereby making another mental barrier.

Madhyamaka Soteriology

It is important to remember that the Madhyamaka ontological analysis is not meant as a disinterested attempt to understand the world but is meant to lead people to the end of suffering by ending our cycle of rebirths since lives are inherently open to pains and dissatisfaction — in short, to end suffering (*duhkha*) — by transforming a person's outlook through meditative experiences. That is the context of all Buddhist praxis. It does not make Buddhism any less philosophical, but Buddhism should never be treated as simply a form of philosophy. Here the dispute between Bhavaviveka and Chandrakirti should be seen as two Buddhist analogs oftheologians battling out the best way to lead others to enlightenment. To Chandrakirti, Bhavaviveka's way of arguing makes emptiness into a mental object to which one may become attached, thereby hindering the quest to uproot illusion. The same with a fixation on forms of argument. Thus, itcan be objected to on soteriological grounds. Chandrakirti's claims to silence concerning ultimate truths may also result from the same concern: we will end up seeing the world through a conceptual screen that cannot reflect its real nature.

Chandrakirti did prevail within Central and East Asian Buddhism in the long run, but his radical undercutting of all claims also has problems from a soteriological point of view. With all emphasis onthe ultimate ontological status of things, accepting entities even conventionally is problematic for him. His approach does supposedly lead to a positive, if ineffable, experience revealing reality as it truly is (*tattva*), but his negative approach leaves nothing positive to say about that reality. Nagarjuna's ideas were certainly not that negative. By itself, Chandrakirti's approach is too negative to produce any positive result. Its negativity can only work as a response to some more positive ontological system, such as other Mahayana Buddhist beliefs. In isolation, his *via negativa* cannot lead anyone to enlightenment.

Shantideva and the Factual Foundations of Morality

The question of philosophical ethics has not figured prominently in this book or in Volume 1. But Shantideva may be "the greatest of all Buddhist ethicists" (Goodman 2009: 89). Of special interest, his discussions of how the bodhisattva's life works in *Entering the Bodhisattva's Path* raise a key factual issue for mystical morality. To be moral, when deciding how to act one must take into consideration the welfare of those impacted from their point of view (see Jones 2004: 33-35). Morality has factual presuppositions (i.e., factual circumstances that must obtain for a moral concern to be operative). One is these is that there is someone distinct from yourself that can be the subject of moral concern; otherwise, we may be only concerned with our own welfare. (See ibid.: 27, 151-52, 189-92, 307-308.) Thus, if there are no sentient beings who suffer, why be compassionate — who is there to be compassion toward? In addition, if one argues that there is nothing in me to be selfish about, then there also is nothing in others for me to morally concerned about either: if selfishness cannot be grounded in reality since there is no *self*, then there are no *others* to be compassion toward either. So too, if I should not *hate* anyone because there are no real selves to hate — what doI hate? their hair? their bones? — then so too I cannot *be compassionate* toward anyone — what I am being compassionate toward? their hair? their bones? If there is no way to ground hatred or anger in what is real, then there is no way to ground love or moral concern either — that is simply the other side of the same coin.

Consider *Entering the Bodhisattva's Path* 9.75-76. The opponent asks, as we would: "If there are no sentient beings, for whom can there be compassion?" Shantideva replies: "For the sake of the fruit (i.e., enlightenment), it is imagined by a convention of delusion that there are 'sentient beings.'" The opponent then asks: "If there are no sentient beings, who gains the fruit of enlightenment?" And Shantideva answers: "Since it is true that there are no real sentient beings, the effort is from a deluded idea. But for the sake of ending suffering, the delusion of the fruit of 'enlightenment' is not removed."

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But Shantideva's responses in terms of "conventional beings" are not adequate unless there is still some reality there from the ultimate point of view that can be directed to enlightenment and can achieve enlightenment. However, he begins the chapter on wisdom by adopting the Madhyamaka doctrine of "two types of truths" (BC 9.2-4) and by claiming that yogins see entities in the world and use conventional truths (BC 9.5, 8). By that distinction, he can accept the necessary conventional and ultimate realities.

Under the most common Buddhist ontology, there is no "person" but only a connected stream of components of the experienced world (*dharmas*) of a "person" — the conditioned bodily aggregates (*skandhas*). Thus, there are "selfless persons." Mahayanists and Abhidharmists disagree over whether these *dharmas* are real or selfless. There is still the defining subjective experience and intentionality even if there is no "real" person. (On the general philosophical problems surrounding reducing a person to the impersonal and the mental to the nonmental, see Jones forthcoming: chapter 4.) There is suffering, but no "person" who suffers. Abhidharmists hold that suffering is a basic phenomena of the experienced world; Madhymikas accept such phenomena but hold them to be selfless and not eternal and thus not ultimately real. Earlier Madhyamikas would say that"person" is a

dependent designation (*prajnapti*) for the continua of karmic related events, but all would agree it is a fiction. There are intentions (*chetanas*), but no "person" who has intentions. There is a conventional "person," but "it" is a constantly changing process. There is no permanent consciousness — no inner light scanning all inner states — but there are still the states. Thus, there is all the internal psychological phenomena associated conventionally with a "person" but no unchanging extra core that "has" them. (See Jones 2004: 189-92.) In particular, when Shantideva denies the self, he never explicitly denies the conventional self — in fact, in most of the text, he makes liberal use of the conventional self (Harris 2011: 99).

But the Buddhologist Paul Williams (1998; also see 1999: 145-46) argues that Shantideva denies a "sentient being" even conventionally and thus that there is no person whose welfare we should be morally concerned about and no person to remove suffering from. Williams realizes that this would destroy the bodhisattva's path. Indeed, under his interpretation, the Mahayana Buddhist way of life is blatantly inconsistent since "the heart of Buddhist insight is the mystery of experience without a subject" (Clayton 2001: 86). And the alleged inconsistency is not revealed by some obtuse logical deduction but lies on the surface of Shantideva's claims. Thus, the very rationality of accepting the Mahayana way of life is radically undercut.

However, a more straightforward understanding of Shantideva's work preserves his rationality in advocating the bodhisattva's life. And nothing else in his texts suggests that Shantideva was inconsistent in his thought. Nor can we assume that he was unaware of contradictions since the basic "Western" logical principles of noncontradiction and the excluded middle are implicit to his method (e.g., BC 9.26, 34), as with the other Madhyamikas. (Nor can we assume that mystics in general have ignored, or feel unconstrained by, such basic logical principles or had "their own logic." [See Jones 1993a.])

Williams focuses on one passage: *Entering the Bodhisattva's Path Entering the Bodhisattva's Path* 103. Here Shantideva says that the continua of consciousness are fictions. There is no one who has suffering or to whom sufferings belong (since there is no real beings). Thus, all sufferings are to be removed without any distinction between one's own and another's. If one asks why suffering is to be prevented, Madhyamikas respond that there is no disagreement by anyone on that point. And if suffering is to be prevented, then all suffering must be prevented: if there are no owners of suffering, there is no ultimate distinction between one's own and anyone else's suffering. However, nothing in this passage suggests that Shantideva is denying a "person" in any conventional sense. He only denies an ultimate reality that is self-existent or that a future conventional self is in the ultimate sense identical to the present conventional self. Similarly, when Shantideva says one person dies and a different one is reborn (BC 8.94-98), this does not suggest anything other than a conventional truth since there are no "persons" to be identical or different. Granted, most Madhyamakins would say that the reborn "person" is *neither the same nor different* than the "person" who died, just as butter and milk are not the same or different — there is no reincarnation of the same person nor total discontinuity. But Shantideva is focusing on how to lead the religious way of life, not on such philosophical issues, and thus we cannot expect the same level of philosophical analysis as in Nagarjuna's philosophical work.

Nevertheless, Shantideva's rationality in advocating a bodhisattva's way of life can be shown. First,

no one should be confused by the analogies of conventional persons to dreams and illusions. Obviously we could not feel compassion toward what does not exist in any way, such as a nonexistent delusion. And persons are fictions (*mrisha*) (BC 8.101). But an illusion is not totally nonexistent. An aggregate of conditions is needed for an illusion to appear (BC 9.10), and thus there is something there. The Madhyamaka analogy to dreams, reflections, illusions, and so forth is only to emphasize that appearances are deceiving and that our conceptions are dependent upon other things, just as a magical trick or a dream is dependent upon other things. The point is that things are not as they seem, not that there is nothing “real” there (i.e., no stream of conditioned components). In sum, it is not the strong sense of totally nonexistent delusions but the sense of dependency that an analogy is used for. When bodhisattvas see “no persons” it means that they see no distinct, self-existent entities, not the absence of conventional beings. If the enlightened thinks of “one who is liberated,” this is only a conventional truth (BC 9.107) since ultimately there are no selves. So too, saying that “suffering is not real” means only that there is no self-existent entity to eliminate or negate, not that there is nothing causing us discomfort.

Williams believes that suffering must be deemed “free floating” and “disembodied” (1998: 165) if there no conventional “self” — i.e., suffering is not tied to mental states of particular subjects. But nothing in Shantideva’s work suggests that suffering is not tied to the subjective experience of a “person” (i.e., a psychological component to the stream of aggregates). If I stick my hand in a fire, I will feel pain; you maycringe in sympathy, but you do not feel that pain. And restating this more accurately in terms of “streams of becoming” does not change this. There is the opportunity to remove suffering even if there is no independently existing center of experience that would be a “self,” and even if suffering is not a discrete, self-existent entity itself. There is a subjective state of suffering even if there is no discrete “person” to experience it — no metaphysical claim of distinct “persons” is in any way required. Even without conventional “persons,” there still are *pains* (contra Williams 1998: 174) in the *streams of becoming*, and thus there is a reality to experience them. In sum, there is a subjective component of a “person” that experiences suffering, even if there is no “owner of pain,” and that is all the reality needed for suffering to be a problem. There is no danger of an ontological nihilism (see Jones 2009: 139-140): the streams of becoming are real enough and distinct enough to ground morality. Even if there is no unchanging core *conventionally* (as Shantideva argues), there is no reason to conclude that suffering floats free from our subjective states. In no way is Shantideva being rationally inconsistent (contra Williams 1998: 174).

Williams must downplay the Buddhist claim of the *causal continuity* of persons over time, including between one life and the next, that results from karmic actions. Karma provides a continuity and coherence. Williams has to disallow that there are connected series of causes and effects constituting different impermanent but continuous “streams of becoming” conventionally conceived in terms of distinct entities as “persons.” The conventional “self” has a continuity that the interactions between different streams do not have that keeps its stream distinct. He rightly points out that there are interactions between different streams (e.g., your sneeze causing my cold). The world is an interplay of such causal events. But he cannot successfully argue from this that there is no stronger continuity in different streams of becoming than between them. He must ignore memories and in particular the classic Indian paranormal claim that the spiritually advanced can *remember their past lives*: such memories reveal a coherence to different lines of rebirths — the Buddha may have been able to remember his own past lives (including his lives as an animal) and others’, but he could not

remember anyother "person's" stream of becoming as "his" own. Different streams remain distinct, and it is these streams that a bodhisattva can guide toward enlightenment, as described by Shantideva. Like most people in the West today, Williams may not accept rebirth, but Shantideva's acceptance of its realitygives a rational factual basis for his claims and his advocacy of the bodhisattva's way of life.

On a related point, if there is no such causal continuity, we have no *control* over what happens through causal predictions, and then there is no point in even trying to end any suffering, either one's own or another's — all suffering is random. We may try haphazardly to stop some suffering, but that would not be rational because we could not predict the outcome of our actions. And even if some suffering were ended, it would not help anyone in the long run since personal events would still remain random. In fact, all morality would be out: why bother to try to help others if our acts would at most only have a random effect on them and not assist anyone's future?

But the important point is that selfless "streams of becoming" are sufficient to ground morality: there is some reality other than yourself whose interests you can take into account. No particular metaphysical conception of the "other" beyond that is needed — there need not be an eternal, permanent "self," but only some reality other than yourself that needs help and can be affected by your actions. The Buddhist conception of a "selfless person" fits this: there is still something "real" there even if there is no core "self." (See Jones 2004: 189-92.) Moreover, it is not rational to remain only aloof and uncaring as long as there is a reality that can experience suffering and can be helped by being directed to enlightenment. So too, a bodhisattva can take into account the *uniqueness* of each personal stream of becoming and adjust the Buddhist teachings and his actions to help in the most effective way. For example, he would not give up his life for a "person" whose disposition to compassion is not pure (BC 5.87). (Also note that Shantideva's idea of the "equality of oneself and others" or of "exchanging others for oneself" [BC 8.120-24; Sk 1] is at most a conventional truth, since there are no real selves, and thus this claim is not the ultimate ontological basis for grounding morality. But the practice does tend to overcome the tendency to differentiate one's own suffering and happiness from that of others [Clayton 2001: 92]. However, his analogy in BC 9.91, 99, and 114 that all persons are connected like the hand and foot in the body does not fit well with the general Buddhist metaphysics that denies wholes as real, nor is it needed to support his point.)

However, it should be noted that a metaphysics of selflessness does not *entail*the moral value of being concerned for others — "ought" does not follow from "is" here. (See Jones 2004: 192-93. David Hume first raised the problem. Most classical thinkers would not see a distinction between "is" and "ought": they may well see their descriptive concepts as having a normative component too. But that does not mean that we cannotsee the issue in their concepts once the issue has been raised.) From the metaphysics of "all things are empty of self-existence," three options are possible: compassion for others, a selfish regard for one's own stream of becoming, or simple indifference to others. Seeing things as they reallyare (*yathabhutam*, *tathata*) does not automatically compel any of these value options. So too, we may well accept that all suffering is inherently bad (despite some pains being warning signs, as when we stick our hand in fire). Nevertheless, since all suffering is the same, one can concentrate on removing the suffering in one's own stream of becoming — it is the equal of anyone's, and none have an inherent priority over the suffering we immediate experience. We need to add a moral concern for others to decide to focus on other's suffering.

Thus, Buddhists can be "selfish" even while rejecting the idea of a "permanent self" and hence not be moral. The Theravada tradition exemplifies this (see Jones 2004: 149-79). It is the Mahayanists who made the value of moral concern for others for their own sake central (ibid.: 181-213). But it is not the case that their metaphysics entails morality. For example, texts of the Perfection of Wisdom tradition also warn against developing wisdom (*prajna*) without equally developing compassion (*karuna*), which would not be necessary if wisdom automatically engendered compassion.

One may argue that people have an "innate nature" to be compassionate or "other-regarding" — so that removing a sense of self (or any other duality) leads naturally to a compassionate concern for others (see Harris 2011: 116 n. 23). Still, the basic factual metaphysics of *interconnectedness* does not *per se* entail this moral valuation. Rather, there would have to be included an additional belief of a built-in value (compassion) in our nature. That is, our factual nature would then not be itself value-neutral.

More generally, one can adopt a metaphysics of complete impermanence and interconnection without adopting a moral regard for other parts of the interconnected whole: one may still try to maximize the comfort of the impermanent parts connected to your experience at the expense of the other parts — one need not have a sense of permanence and independent to differentiate segments of the whole. Even Williams admits that as a logical matter, the doctrine of "no selfishness" does not follow from the absence of belief in an eternal individual self: "I can quite consistently accept that I have

no metaphysical ~*tman* — say, an independent unchanging Cartesian self —

and be perfectly selfish" (1999: 145-46). If we see all of reality as interconnected, it is easier to see that we are not independent of others and ought to care equally about others' welfare. But such a value is not logically necessitated: we can still favor those parts that affect our subjective experiences most directly and immediately to the detriment of whathas less of an affect on us. That is, it is logically consistent to care about one's "self" and one's "family" over what is happening to "families" on other continents even if we accept that everything is ultimately interconnected.

In sum, morality requires adding a value that the metaphysics of emptiness and interconnectedness does not require. Mysticism's important innovation here is not the metaphysics of impermanence and interconnection — such a metaphysics can readily be accepted for nonmystical reasons, as some naturalists do today. (But mystics add the experiential dimension of not merely accepting the metaphysics but *internalizing* it by making it the framework through which one experiences the world.)Rather, mysticism's contribution is the *evaluation* that all parts are *equal in value*. When mystics adopt morality, this leads to an even-handed concern for all sentient beings, expressed appropriately to each being's needs. Only with this evaluation is even-mindedness possible. Without it, there is no reason why we cannot focus on enhancing our niche within the interconnected world and also maintain the same varying tumultuous emotions toward what occurs to us that we had toward events before we adopted a metaphysics of impermanence and interconnection. That is, "seeing things as they really are" is not the cause of even-mindedness but its result: a metaphysics of complete impermanence and interconnection grounds this way of being.

The Madhyamaka Critiques of the Existence of God

The first thing to notice about the arguments in the two critiques presented here is that they rely on ordinary experience and simple rules of reasoning, not textual authorities or special meditative experiences. Nor do the authors employ emptiness (*shunyata*) as a premise (indeed they do not mention it at all here) or any other specifically Buddhist premise. The author of *The Refutation of Vishnu as the One Creator* follows the basic Madhyamaka method of setting up either/or dichotomies of x and not$x$ that they believe exhaust all the logical possibilities and showing that both branches lead to impossible results (either contradictions or conflicts with everyday experiences), thereby refuting here the very idea of a creator.

The Madhyamikas' opponent's position is based on theworld being *an effect*: the universe, like a pot, has an intelligent instrumental cause. Its presupposition is this: if anything exists, it mustbe created, and any chain of creations must stop with an uncreated creator. (This is a version of the Cosmological Argument based on a creator being necessary for our existence: if there were no uncreated, self-existent reality, no other reality could exist.) Thus, the creator is known by inference from the observation of cause and effect, not a religious experience. (On whether a god could be known through an inference, see Aryadeva's*One Hundred Verses*, chapter 2.) With their focus on causation, it is the only type of argument for the existence of God that Nagarjunians would address. For example, they would not address the moral problem of natural suffering or the possibility of experiencing God.

Notice that the texts do not directly attack self-existence (*svabhava*) — they do not mention the concept at all. (That *The Refutation of Vishnu as the One Creator* is directed to a popular audience would explain why it does not invoke technical terms, including "emptiness.") In fact, the Madhyamikas' argument against the existence of a creator is a simple application of their general argument against what is real (self-existent) since what is real is eternal/permanent and cannot change. What is nonexistent cannot produce

anything real — only what is real could produce something real. That is, what lacks self-existence cannot be related in any way to anything real or unreal since it is not "real." But in addition something real does not produce another thing that is real: an effect could not be real if it is produced. And something real also could not produce (and thus could not be a creator) since any act of creation involves *change*. Thus, if x does not change, it cannot create; but if x creates, it changes, and so it could not be real. So too, anything that creates must have *a cause for that act* and so is not the ultimate cause. Thus, either way, x is not the creator. This applies as much to an alleged creator creating a universe as to ordinary beings creating any simple action.

The general Madhyamaka position can be summarized formally as a short sutra with commentary:

[1] All things are dependently arisen. Nothing existing by self-existence is found.
Commentary: To "self-exist" means to "self-arise." But to self-arise,
something must already exist — i.e., it must already exist to do
anything including *arise*. To self-originate, a reality must already

exist; thus, arising again would be without a purpose and would also be futile; and, if arising occurs, it would go on ad infinitum, but we see that that does not occur to phenomena (MKV 1.3, 8). Thus, whatever exists needs no origination. Also see Nagarjuna's SSK 5, 40, 41 on infinite regress. In addition, nothing arises from itself. See Nagarjuna's MK 1.1 on the first of the four options.

[2] If God is real, then what he creates is also real. But nothing real is found. If God is unreal, then he cannot create anything real or unreal.
Commentary: If the effects are *real*, then they are eternal and permanent (since that is the definition of being "real"), and so they cannot change. But we only see changing phenomena, and so there is no real effect. And without a real effect, there is no real cause since there is no "cause" without an "effect." Nor is our universe as a whole a permanent creation: it will come to an end and be followed by another universe. On the other hand, what is unreal cannot create anything real (since the real cannot be caused by what is itself not real) nor unreal (since the unreal does not exist). Aryadeva also argues against the claim that because Madhyamikas do not deny the reality of "cause and effect," then "birth" and "what is born" are established (SS 8.10): something real does not produce another thing that is real, nor can what is nonexistent produce anything real — real things do not give birth to real things; unreal things do not give birth to unreal things. No real thing gives birth to another real thing. Nor does something unreal give birth to another unreal thing. Nor does a real thing produce an unreal thing — a barren woman does not give birth to a child. Nor does an unreal thing produce a real thing — the hair of a tortoise does not give birth to a cloth. Thus, there is no phenomenon "birth." In addition, if something could give birth to another thing, there would be the birth of two types of phenomena (the thing and "giving birth").

[3] If God is unchanging, no creation is possible. If God changes, no creation is possible.
Commentary: Creation necessarily involves a change. Thus, if God cannot change, he cannot form the thought to creation or do any creating actions. Rather, he is fixed and unchangeable. But if God in fact changes, then he is not self-existent and thus is not real and thus cannot create since what is unreal cannot create anything either real or unreal. Either way, there is no creation of anything real and thus no creation.

[4] Thus, there can be no act of creation. And therefore, there is no creator or anything created.
Commentary: The concepts are interconnected: if there is no creation, then there is no one who "creates" and nothing "created." If one term cannot denote anything real, then none can. In sum, if nothing is real (self-existent), then there is real "creator" and hence no real "act of creating" and nothing real that is "created."

In short, to Madhyamikas the idea of "creation" presents an instance of the Catch-22 dilemma

mentioned earlier: to have the capacity to create, something must be permanent and unchanging, and thus it cannot create since an act of creation would involve a change. That is, to be able to create, something must be real, but what is real is permanent, unchanging, and unmoving, and so the possibility of any change, let alone an act of creation, is ruled out. And if "creating" is impossible, the related concepts of "creator" and "a creation" are in turn ruled out.

One can also see in the Madhyamaka arguments the importance of causation in Madhyamaka thought. The causal force of *karma* takes the place of a creator god. (Karma regulates what appears, but Buddhists make no claim that karma is the ultimate ontological source of what exists.) But the question of origins figures prominently for any phenomenon. Indeed, the *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way* can be seen as simply different applications of Nagarjuna's idea that what is real (eternal, permanent) cannot produce or be produced to various types of phenomena. The more ususal issue in Indian philosophy is not a creator god but this: does an effect preexist in its cause or not? Madhyamikas answer "no" becausean effect is not found preexisting among its causes and conditions. So too, if the cause and effect are the same, the creator and what is created would bethe same.

Notice that the Madhyamikas' arguments apply to any creator god. The argument assumes only as little as is necessary (asis common in Indian philosophy), and so there is no specification of the creator's attributes beyond being a creator. (But the Naiyayikas argue that thecreator must be immaterial since he creates all material.) Arguing that God is "ineffable" — i.e., beyond conceptions — does not help as long as God istaken to be a creator since at least the concept "creator" would apply in some sense. We can fill in the concept any way we like, e.g., with classical or any contemporary Western theistic ideas about the nature of a god that creates. Either a concerned theistic personal god or an impersonal deistic reality that is closer to the Advaitic Brahman will do. This would include the Vedic gods or their avatars acting in history. It would also apply to other alleged creators advanced in classical India — e.g., time, necessity, chance, necessity (e.g., *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* 1.2, 6.1). (Here "necessity [*svabhava*]" means a sort of innate tendency of things to exist, as with "self-existence.") The same argument applies (with the appropriate necessary changes) to all other types of alleged transcendental realities — see Bhavaviveka's MHK chapter 8, translated in Volume 1 on the Advaitic self. Indeed, the argument applies more broadly to any worldly act of creation: the usual term in these arguments for a creator is "*kartri*" — a term applied to any maker or *agent of action*. (Also see MA 6.84-86 where God is treated as simply another possible cause that falls under the Madhyamikas' general analysis of "causes." The entire phenomenal world is created by karmic actions that depend on the mind [MA 6.89].)

The arguments also apply to creation *ex nihilo* or any other way of creating we can imagine. "Ishvara" is basically a blank that can be filled however one wants. But it should be noted that in many schools of Indian thought there are *uncreated* realities — e.g., space, time, matter, karma, or selves. Thus, for them no god is omnipotent. (Most Indian schools would argue that the creator must be *omniscient*, knowing the material he creates with, in order to know how to create. But to the Buddhists no god knows the source of suffering [e.g., MHK 9.118].) A "creator" does not create these but is responsible for the "unrolling" of the universe at the beginning of each cosmic cycle. (One tale is that Brahma deludes himself in thinking he is a creator: he simply is the first entity to "unroll" in a new creation and mistakenly thinks he creates all that follows him.) To Buddhists, Ishvara and the other gods are sentient beings in the cycle of rebirth who become gods by their past wholesome

karmic actions. The creation of the universe, like the realms formed from meditative achievements, resultsfrom consciousness — it is a collective product of past karmic acts. The universe is not eternal forward in time and will disappear if all sentient beings become enlightened.

Shantideva in *Entering the Bodhisattva's Path* 9.118-25 makes some standard points. He first asks if "Ishvara" is merely another name for the impersonal great elements (*dhatus*) and then shows why they cannot be the creator: they are multiple while a creator must beone, inactive while a creator must be active, impermanent while a creator must be real and thus permanent/eternal, and so forth. Also the elements do not have the nature of gods (*deva-tas*). And if the creator is beyond conception (*achitta*, "inconceivable," or "not of the mind"), what can be said of his inconceivable creativity? Shantideva also raises objections to what is supposedly created by a creator — the alleged "creations" are either eternal (and thus uncreated) or created by our karmic actions. And if the cause has no beginning, it is never active, and so how can there be any effect? Nor can a creator be contingent upon any causes or conditions — even if he acts on his own desires, he is subject to those desires and thus is not the "lord."

A later Madhyamaka text, the *Tattvasamgraha*, adds more objections. First, everything is produced successively, but a real creator would create everything simultaneously since there are no obstacles that could prevent anything from being created; if it is objected that some other cause is needed to make things appear, then the creator is not the lord but dependent on those causes for action (and this would lead to an infinite regress of causes); so too, why would his desires that are related to what is created not arise simultaneously in what is real (permanent/eternal)? Since the creator would be omnipresent, nothing could inhibit his actions. The creator must be one and undifferentiated, and what he creates must reflect their cause and thus also be one and undifferentiated, but we see that things are not that way. So too, for the same reason the creator could not first create some cosmic principle that then created diverse things since such a principle would have to undifferentiated to reflect its cause. So too, anything created would have to reflect its permanent/eternal creator and so be permanent/eternal. So too, being eternal (timeless) prevents any creation since creation requires acts and relations between things over time — i.e., the creator would be outside the realm of time and could not spread his acts over a period of time.

A point made in Volume 1 is worth reiterating here: *emptiness* (*shunyata*) itself should not be seen as a creator god. Aryadeva's refutes the idea that *emptiness* is itself a real (self-existent) phenomenon (SS chapter 10). Many Westerners today take emptiness to be an analog to God and refer to it as "the Void" with a capital "V." But Nagarjuna and those following him make clear that emptiness is not an*entity* of any type or the *source* of the reality of anything (see MK 13.8). It is not anything that *transcends* the world but is merely a description of the true state of all phenomena of the world: phenomenal reality as it truly is (*tattva*) is empty of *self-existence* (*svabhava*), i.e., empty of anything that would make phenomena into substantive, discrete, permanent "real" realities. (On the "emptiness of emptiness," see the Note on MA 6.186.) Madhyamikas claim nothing beyond the impermanence and conditionality of the phenomena of the world except denying any transcendent creator. Such matters are, like the matters that the Buddha left unanswered (*avyakrita*, e.g., *Majjhima Nikaya*, 1.426-32; see Pr 535-37), irrelevant to the soteriological goal of ending suffering.

More generally, these critiques of God had a soteriological objective and were not made out of a

disinterested philosophical interest: to remove any possible mental idols that we may become attached to and thus to facilitate the end of suffering. This soteriological perspective may have affected the Madhyamikas' judgment on the issue, but it consistent with the rest of their program. And since there is no creator god, there is no God to experience and thus, unlike in the West, there is no argument for the existence of God based on religious experience. But most important from the Buddhist point of view, even if there were a creator god, an experience of him would not end the problem of suffering, as Bhavaviveka points out (MHK 9.118) — experiencers would still have an image in their mind, and the mind must be emptied of all conceptual content for liberation to occur.

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